

**A comparative study of gratitude expressions in Norwegian  
and English from an interlanguage pragmatic and second  
language acquisition research perspective**



by

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## Summary

The aims and goals of this study have been to find out how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English as a foreign language express gratitude in certain situations. Based on the impression that Norwegians may appear impolite to people from other cultures, I hypothesised that this might be related to how Norwegians express gratitude in English, i.e. that they do not adjust to the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norms of English, but simply transfer their L1 strategies. To determine whether this was the case or not, I adopted the discourse completion test, originally constructed by Eisenstein and Bodman in connection with their 1986 article, translated it into Norwegian and handed it out to two groups of Norwegian students enrolled in an introductory grammar course at the University of Oslo. The students were given 13 situations, six of which were in Norwegian and seven in English. The questionnaire was also handed out via email to a group of some 20 native speakers of British English connected to the University of York. The responses were analysed and coded according to Karin Aijmer's (1996) strategies of gratitude and the categories in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles (1986, 1993). In some cases, I also had to use my own tentative terminology. The material was also compared to Eisenstein and Bodman's results as well as considered in relation to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness.

The results showed that although there are several differences between the US, the UK and Norway, the Norwegian participants relied heavily on their L1 pragmatic competence when expressing gratitude. The results also indicated several underlying differences with regards to the respective politeness systems. The native speakers of Norwegian and native speakers of English judged the relationship between themselves and the hearer and the size of the imposition differently in several situations. The native speakers of Norwegian also tended to apply to the hearer's negative face to restore 'the harmonious relationship' with their interlocutor, whereas the native speakers of English frequently used positive politeness strategies.

My results give clear indications of certain sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic differences which need to be considered in order for Norwegian learners to communicate successfully in English.

# 1 Introduction

Politeness or “høflighet” is defined as “showing good manners toward others, as in behavior, speech, etc.” (*Dictionary.com*) and “det å være hensynsfull og dannet” (*Bokmålsordboka*) in Norwegian, and is reflected in how we express ourselves and communicate with others. Although acting this way may seem relatively straightforward, reality indicates otherwise. How to act and express ourselves politely may become especially difficult when we are using another language than our mother tongue. Studies have shown that it is not necessarily enough to learn the grammar and vocabulary of a language, but that it is equally necessary to acquire pragmatic knowledge in order to communicate successfully. Yu (2004:102) points this out in her study of responses to compliments by Chinese learners of American English. Yu states that sometimes it is not enough to understand the literal meaning of words, but that we need to know the rules for interpreting those words as well, and that the failure to do so may lead to pragmatic failure and serious problems for second language learners.

Politeness and the way we act and express ourselves are subjects which many people are interested in and have strong opinions about and which have been the subject of many debates in the Norwegian media. My impression is that there is a common assumption among people of other nationalities that Norwegians are impolite. Even Norwegians perceive themselves as being impolite. The American Susan M. Guerra, a contributor to the book *Typisk norsk å være uhøflig*, emphasizes this point in her article. “Mest slående er det at nordmenn selv ikke synes at de er et høflig folk. Mari, 26 år, hudpleier og bartender, svarte: ’Nei. Vi er et kaldt folkeslag. Vi tenker oss ikke om eller bryr oss om andres ve og vel’” (Guerra 2005:93-94). This ‘national rudeness’ has also been dealt with in a series of articles in *Aftenposten*. Knut Olav Åmås, the writer of one of these articles, quotes the Norwegian author Torgrim Eggen; “Nordmenn er preget av en skrikende mangel på alminnelig høflighet.” He goes on to state that Norwegians’ impolite behaviour may have something to do with the Norwegian way of life and Norwegians’ wish and ability to behave appropriately according to the situation. Finally, he argues that “... Dessuten er nordmenn ofte mindre dyktige på det uformelle, sosiale plan” (*Aftenposten*).

There is no evident explanation for this 'Norwegian impoliteness'. However, Fretheim underlines that it would be "a gross misunderstanding to claim that Norwegians do not pay any attention to the negative or positive face wants of their interlocutors" (Fretheim 2005:145). He also states that this stereotypic view of Norwegian society is perhaps due to "the fact that so little research has been done on the way that politeness is reflected in the Norwegian language" (Fretheim 2005:145). In this thesis, I want to study how Norwegians express gratitude in English and Norwegian and whether this particular speech act, which is closely related to politeness, contributes to create this negative stereotypic view of Norwegian linguistic behaviour. I hypothesise that Norwegians may be regarded as impolite because they assume that their culturally determined values are universal and thus transfer the way they express themselves from Norwegian into the target language.

I am not arguing that the Norwegian way of speaking is 'more impolite' than e.g. English. It is rarely fruitful to argue that one language culture is more polite or impolite than another. What is interesting is how politeness is reflected in the different language cultures. Different cultures are thought to exhibit different communicative behaviours, which again reflect different hierarchies of cultural values (Røkaas 2000:111). In her study of Norwegian and American requesting behaviour, Røkaas argues that "Norwegians are frequently misunderstood as being 'unfriendly' by Americans because of the absence of conventionalized verbal and non-verbal acknowledgement strategies towards strangers" (Røkaas 2000:117). She explains this by arguing that forms of hierarchy in the Norwegian language "have been erased in an attempt to squash status differences in the egalitarian social welfare state" (Røkaas 2000:120). Gray, in his master thesis on foreign students' impression of Norwegian politeness norms, offers a different explanation "den manglende illokusjonære handling 'å hilse på noen' truer muligens ansikt i andre språkkulturer, mens i Norge kan det true ukjente menneskers negative ansikt å trenge inn i deres private sfære, noe som en hilsning fra et uvedkommende menneske trolig er (i Norge). Derfor hilser man ikke" (Gray 2005:57). These examples illustrate that when communicating in another language, there are several aspects that need to be considered in order to communicate successfully. These aspects can be summarised as follows



*Sociocultural ability* refers to the respondents' skill at selecting speech act strategies which are appropriate given (1) the culture involved, (2) the age and the sex of the speakers, (3) their social class and occupations, and (4) their roles and status in the interaction.

*Sociolinguistic ability* refers to the respondents' skill at selecting appropriate linguistic forms to express the particular strategy used to realize the speech act (e.g., expression of regret in an apology, registration of a grievance in a complaint, specification of the objective of a request, or the refusal of an invitation). Sociolinguistic ability is the speakers' control over the actual language forms used to realize the speech act ..., as well as their control over register or formality of the utterance from most intimate to most formal language. (Cohen 1996:22-23)

Thus it is not only a prerequisite for the speaker to know the language the speaker is speaking in, but it is important to be familiar with the cultural norms relevant to the language and the proper linguistic forms to use as well. This may cause problems for second language learners who have to “engage in both item learning and system learning” as well as pragmatic learning (Ellis 1997:13) and may lead to negative linguistic and pragmatic transfer. Thus, being aware of the way culture affects the way we express ourselves is clearly an influential factor in successful communication.

As I indicated above, I am interested in one possible source of the somewhat negative impression of Norwegians' linguistic behaviour. I have concentrated on one restricted area of communication and language production in particular, namely the production of gratitude expressions by native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English. The notion of speech acts has been investigated from a number of angles; philosophical, social, linguistic and cultural (Cohen 1996: 21). However, in earlier studies, researchers have mainly concentrated on other speech acts than thanking, particularly requests, see e.g. Blum-Kulka 1982, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1986 and House & Kasper 1987. Apologies and compliments are other speech acts which have been the subject of several studies, see e.g. Trosborg 1987 and Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989's studies of apologies and Wolfson 1989's study of compliments.

Despite the lack of focus from scholars, expressing gratitude is considered very important in most cultures. In 1976, Goffman stated that “Middle-class children in our society are taught to preface every statement to an adult with a request of by-your-leave and to terminate every encounter, if not every interchange, with some version of thank you” (Goffman 1976, cited in Aijmer 1996:33). In their articles on expressing gratitude in American English (1986, 1993) Eisenstein and Bodman stress the fact that “expressing

gratitude is a language function that has important social value ... A mark of its importance is the amount of time and effort invested by adults in teaching small children how and when to thank others” (1986:167). As a native speaker of Norwegian, I can identify with this important social value of expressing gratitude. In my experience, thanking is given similar prominence in the upbringing of children in Norwegian culture. However, as I pointed out, despite this great cultural importance, there are relatively few studies on the subject. Perhaps the most famous studies are that of Coulmas (1980) who studied thanking and apologising from a contrastive point of view and those of Eisenstein and Bodman (1986, 1993) who studied the production of gratitude expressions by native and non-native speakers of English.

In their 1986 article, Eisenstein and Bodman conducted a survey to discover whether advanced-level non-native speakers of English who had lived in the US for one or more years were able to express gratitude successfully in English. In the article, Eisenstein and Bodman list several situations in which it would be natural for speakers of American English to express gratitude. Based on their observations, they constructed a Discourse Completion Test, (DCT), which was distributed to native speakers of English and learners of English (ESL). Their intention was to collect data from native speakers to find out how they expressed gratitude and compare it to data from non-native speakers of English to see whether they were able to produce similar expressions the same situations. Their results showed that “advanced non-native English speakers had considerable difficulty adequately expressing gratitude in the target language” (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986:176). They also showed that some of the problems were of a pragmatic nature. In the early 1990s, they conducted a similar, but more extensive study, using the same DCT complemented by role plays and an oral administration of the questionnaire. Based on their findings from their 1986 article, Eisenstein and Bodman now acknowledged that

Expressions of gratitude can range from simple, phatic utterances to lengthy communicative events mutually developed by both the giver and recipient of a gift, favor, reward, or service. Most native speakers of English on a conscious level associate the expression of gratitude with the words “thank you”; however, they are unaware of the underlying complex rules and the mutuality needed for expressing gratitude in a manner satisfying to both the giver and the recipient. Similarly, second and foreign language learners are unaware of the underlying rules for expressing gratitude in English; in fact, they usually assume that the expression of gratitude is universal and remain unaware of significant differences in its cross-cultural realization (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986).

Because of this, the function of expressing gratitude is particularly difficult for learners to perform successfully. (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:64)

In order to find out whether Norwegian speakers are seen as impolite due to failure to follow target language norms for the performance of speech acts, I intend to perform a similar investigation to Eisenstein and Bodman's. I will study gratitude expressions made by native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) and use their studies as a point of departure. The situations in their DCT are based on observations of natural situations in which an expression of gratitude would be appropriate and they have been thoroughly tested to ensure their naturalness and to avoid any ambiguity or uncertainty regarding the social roles of the participants etc. Thus they form a good foundation for further study. Using the same DCT also creates a basis for comparison. The data will be analysed based on Eisenstein and Bodman's system and the categories presented by Karin Aijmer in her chapter on thanking in *Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity* (1996). The results will be compared to the results in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles and my own control group of native speakers of British English.

I have adopted a "research-then-theory"-approach (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991, cited in Kasper & Rose, 2002:15), i.e. a deductive approach, due to the fact that I am venturing into uncharted territory. Kasper and Rose argue that the "research-then-theory"-method may be "more appropriate at a stage where descriptive accounts of pragmatic development are still scarce" (Kasper & Rose, 2002:15). I will not focus on pragmatic development as such in this thesis, but I still feel that this method is appropriate, because little work has been done with regards to pragmatics and the way politeness is reflected in the Norwegian language (compare Fretheim above).

My overall research objective is to describe how students of English with Norwegian as their mother tongue, would express gratitude in the particular contexts which have been preestablished by Eisenstein and Bodman. My research questions can be formulated as follows:

- How do native speakers of Norwegian (students) express gratitude in Norwegian in these situations?
- How do native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English (EFL) at university level express gratitude in these situations in English?

- Do instances of pragmatic transfer occur? And if this is the case, are they of a negative character? (Can they contribute to misunderstandings, failed relationship, or a view of Norwegians as impolite?)
- Does the (Norwegian and British) participants' performance in the DCT tell us anything about underlying differences in the respective politeness systems?
- Do students of English as a foreign language at university level have sufficient pragmatic knowledge to express gratitude successfully in English?

By looking at these research questions in the light of interlanguage pragmatics and second language acquisition, I hope to determine whether Norwegians might appear impolite because they are following Norwegian norms for performing speech acts rather than the target language norm. As observed by Gumperz, “culturally colored interactional styles create culturally determined expectations and interpretative strategies and can lead to breakdowns in intercultural and interethnic communication (Gumperz 1978, cited in Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:1). I also intend to see whether the results could indicate any underlying differences in the respective politeness systems.

It is particularly interesting to look at this from a Norwegian perspective because very little research has been conducted within the field of speech act production in Norwegian. Up to 1991, there had been no empirical studies of how Norwegians express speech acts in certain situations (Svanes 1991:7). Since 1991 only a limited number of studies have been carried out (e.g. Røkaas 2000), none of which have dealt with gratitude expressions. Gray states that hardly any research has been done describing Norwegian pragmatic practices. He argues that ”... man trenger mye mer empiri på norsk språk, gjennomført med etnografiske teknikker, fra *etic* perspektiv” (Gray 2005:51, his emphasis). Secondly, Norwegians are thought to have a more reserved communication style than English-speaking Americans or Britons and thus it would be interesting to shed some light on stereotypic myths like this in this era of internationalisation and globalisation.

The research questions are also interesting from a second language acquisition point of view. The investigation of speech acts, such as thanking, is relevant because one of the goals of SLA research is to determine what the learners know about “the language they are trying to learn” (Ellis 1997:4), the target language. Most SLA research has been

focusing on formal features of language rather than the development of the communicative aspects of language (Ellis 1997:4). My research will also add to the knowledge about learning and transfer of pragmatic knowledge, something that is relatively understudied, and even more so when it comes to Norwegians' acquisition of English. I hope to illustrate the importance of pragmatic competence and cultural knowledge in second language learning and perhaps even suggest an explanation for the impression that people from other nationalities may have of Norwegians. If the way Norwegians express gratitude is different from that of other cultures, there is a potential threat that this way of expressing oneself may be transferred into a second language and thus be considered impolite.

Due to the limitations of time and scope, this study will not aim to propose any conclusions as to how Norwegians in general express gratitude in all possible situations, nor will it explore other reasons as to why Norwegians may appear impolite to people of other nationalities. My study is a qualitative study and thus further statistical testing is necessary to secure the value of the results. Additionally, several factors relevant to expressing gratitude will have to be left out, i.e. intonation/prosody, expressing gratitude in writing and the differences between text types. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to study the effect the expressions of gratitude may have on the hearer. Communication is a cooperative task, and the success of performing a speech act such as thanking, depends on the effect it has on the hearer. Unfortunately, this is also beyond the scope of the present study.

The following chapters will explore my research questions in more detail and suggest answers to what I have set out to explain. The second chapter will present and discuss the theoretical background for this study as well as the sources of inspiration. In chapter three, I will go on to justify the method I have adopted and explain how the survey was conducted along with some background information about the participants. In chapter four, I will present the results and focus on the research questions dealing with how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English express gratitude in Norwegian and English. Following the presentation of the results, there will be a discussion of the tendencies they reveal, i.e. whether or not transfer occurs and what their responses indicate with regards to differences in the respective politeness systems. By

discussing the responses, I will try to answer my final three research questions presented above. The discussion will lead up to the conclusion and a summary of the main tendencies in the sixth and final chapter.

## **2 Theoretical background**

In the following sections I will touch upon the areas within pragmatics and second language acquisition which are relevant for my study. I will present some of the most significant theories within these fields and discuss how they are relevant to my research. First, relevant research within the field of pragmatics will be discussed, including speech acts, politeness and how culture affects the way we speak. Furthermore, I will say something about second language acquisition and the factors which may influence how learners acquire pragmatic competence in a second language.

### **2.1 Pragmatics**

Pragmatics studies the sort of phenomena that will be dealt with in this paper. Pragmatics, as defined by Crystal (1997, cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:2), concerns itself with “language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”. Pragmatics is often discussed in relation to semantics and some scholars see pragmatics as a part or an aspect of semantics, e.g. Wierzbicka (1991). For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to see pragmatics as a separate linguistic branch. I maintain the distinction between semantics, the inherent meaning of lexical items, and pragmatics, meaning in use, i.e. abstract meaning and contextual meaning, respectively (Thomas 1995:2-3).

#### **2.1.1 Speech acts**

The study of speech acts is central within the field of pragmatics. Speech acts can be defined loosely as “acts done in the process of speaking” (Sadock 2005:53) and have been the subject of many studies since they first aroused interest in the 1900s. To explain what a speech act actually is, it can be useful to refer to the works of J. L. Austin (1962, 1970, 1971, etc.) which are regarded as the first modern studies of speech acts. Traditionally, language was viewed as the giving and receiving of information and the

expressing of statements. This view was maintained by logical positivists, who argued that all meaningful statements could be judged either true or false, an approach which later was adopted within an area known as truth conditional semantics (Thomas 1995:30).

Austin questioned this traditional view of language and argued that we do not use language merely to make statements, but also to perform actions (Austin 1962:6). He argued that we use a certain type of sentences to perform actions simply by uttering them in the correct circumstances, e.g. “I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife” (Austin 1962:5). “... It seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing ... or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it” (Austin 1962:6, his emphasis). In a series of lectures at Harvard University, he suggested that several utterances cannot be considered to be either true or false, but can more correctly be viewed as performing an action. Utterances which included verbs that had this function he referred to as performatives, a term derived from the verb to perform, e.g. “I name this ship the *Queen Elisabeth*” (Austin 1962:64). Austin contrasted performative utterances, speech acts, with constative utterances, which logical positivist philosophers had judged to be either true or false.

We might say: in ordinary cases, for example running, it is the fact that he is running which makes the statement that he is running true; or again, that the truth of the constative utterance ‘he is running’ depends on his being running. Whereas in our case it is the happiness of the performative ‘I apologize’ which makes it the fact that I am apologizing: and my success in apologizing depends on the happiness of the performative utterance ‘I apologize. This is one way in which we might justify the ‘performative-constative’ distinction – the distinction between doing and saying (Austin 1962:47).

Austin’s performative hypothesis involved a distinction between utterances that describe or report facts, i.e. constative utterances and utterances which are performing an action simply by being uttered, i.e. performative utterances. Austin argued that while the constative utterances could be either true or false, performative utterances are felicitous or non-felicitous, i.e. successful or unsuccessful. In order for the performative to be happy i.e. felicitous, certain conditions must be in order, e.g. for the performative utterance *I do take this woman...* to be felicitous, it has to be uttered in the appropriate circumstances and by the ‘correct’ participant. Austin referred to the doctrine of the felicity conditions that could go wrong in such situations as “the doctrine of the *Infelicities*” (Austin 1962:14, his emphasis). Altering his initial argument, Austin later



widened his definition of speech acts to include utterances with all verbs and not only performatives. Thomas (1995:44) introduces several reasons for the collapse of Austin's initial performative hypothesis: "(i) There is no formal (grammatical) way of distinguishing performative verbs from other sorts of verbs. (ii) The presence of a performative verb does not guarantee that the specified act is performed. (iii) There are ways of 'doing things with words' which do not involve using performative verbs".

Critics of Austin have argued that Austin's descriptions of speech acts such as christening are not typical of language production. Strawson, one of the critics, pointed out that "such illocutionary acts ordinarily take place in highly formal ritualistic or ceremonial situations ..." (Strawson 1971, cited in Sadock 2005:59). However, the performative hypothesis was just one step in Austin's argumentation. His theory of speech acts still holds. He just did not maintain that there were any essential differences between performatives and constatives. In the end Austin viewed all utterances as 'performatives' or speech acts, and argued that only the felicity conditions, i.e. the circumstances in which the utterance is being uttered, are different. Austin argued that truth and falsity were not qualities of statements, but rather a dimension of assessment, i.e. "how the words stand in respect of satisfactoriness to the facts, events, situations ... to which they refer" (Austin 1962:149).

In his description of speech acts, Austin also made a threefold distinction between different aspects of the speech act situation, which several scholars have adopted later.

A fitting way to begin the study of speech-act verbs is with the well-known distinction Austin makes between three kinds of speech act: a locutionary act (performing the act of saying something), an illocutionary act (performing the act in saying something), and a perlocutionary act (performing an act by saying something). (Leech 1983:199, emphasis removed)

A locutionary act can be explained as producing a meaningful linguistic expression. The production of an illocutionary act is related to the speaker's communicative purpose. This communicative purpose is also known as *illocutionary force* or simply *force*. We could say that "the illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance" (Yule 1996:48). Today, the term *speech act* itself has for many come to comprise just this one dimension. The third dimension introduced by Austin, the perlocutionary act, can be

defined as the production of an effect on the hearer or the actual effect that the utterance has on the hearer. This is also often referred to as the *perlocutionary effect*. Thomas (1995:49) gives an example of the three dimensions: The speaker says “It’s hot in here”. The stringing together of the words according to the grammatical rules of the language and the actual uttering of them is the locution. The speaker’s illocutionary force may be “I want some fresh air”, and the perlocutionary effect may be that someone opens the window.

The relationship between locution, illocution and perlocution is important is relevant with regards to studies of speech acts from a cross-cultural perspective. In a cross-cultural setting, the hearer may have difficulties understanding the speaker’s force and thus misunderstands the speaker’s intention. Thomas (1983:93) gives several examples of such misunderstandings, e.g. A: *Is this coffee sugared?* B: *I don’t think so. Does it taste as if it is?* In this conversation, speaker B interprets speaker A’s question as a request for information, while the intended effect was an apology or an offer to fetch the sugar, i.e. as would have been the ‘appropriate’ response to a complaint. Yule (1996:49) discusses this important aspect of speech act research and poses the question: “How can speakers assume that the intended illocutionary force is understood by the hearer?” He answers his question by mentioning two factors that are important in speech events, namely Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) and felicity conditions.

Perhaps the most obvious IFID would be using an explicit performative, i.e. a speech act which includes a performative verb, as opposed to an implicit performative, i.e. a speech act which does not include a performative verb, or another indirect way of expressing oneself. By using an IFID such as “I warn you that A” (Yule 1996:49), the force may be easier to recognise by the hearer. Thus by stating “I warn you that A” the hearer recognises that the speaker intends to warn him/her. Yule also mentions other IFIDs, such as intonation and stress (Yule 1996:50). Felicity conditions deal with the circumstances around the utterance of the act. Some speech acts have to be uttered in a certain setting in order to be felicitous, but there are also preconditions in everyday production of speech acts. Yule mentions five different conditions; the general conditions, the content conditions, the preparatory conditions, the sincerity condition and the essential condition (Yule 1996:50-51). An example of a general condition is that the

interlocutors speak the same language. An example of a content condition is that if the intention of the speaker is to warn the hearer, the content of the warning has to be about a future event, which the speaker expects to happen. Yule illustrates preparatory conditions by referring to the preparatory conditions of a warning: “When I utter a warning, there are the following preparatory conditions: It isn’t clear that the hearer knows the event will occur, the speaker does think the event will occur, and the event will not have a beneficial effect” (Yule 1996:51). The sincerity condition is related to the preparatory conditions and is concerned with the speaker’s intentions, e.g. that the speaker thinks a future event will not have a beneficiary effect in the case of a warning. Finally under the essential condition “the utterance changes my state from non-informing of a bad future event to informing” (Yule 1996:51).

Austin’s research on speech acts has laid the foundation for many studies from a variety of angles. In relation to my study of the speech act of thanking in a cross-cultural perspective, the distinction made by Austin and adopted by, e.g. Leech (1983) between locution, illocution and perlocution is particularly relevant. As stated in the introduction, one of my research objectives is to establish which strategies Norwegian learners of English use to express gratitude in certain situations, i.e. their locution. The illocution is preestablished as being that of expressing gratitude. However, if the way native speakers of Norwegian express gratitude in English is different from that of native speakers of English, the utterance may not have the intended perlocutionary effect in a cross-cultural setting and in extreme cases the illocutionary act itself might not be recognized. The interlocutors may experience misunderstandings and the speech act will be infelicitous, i.e. unsuccessfully performed (Austin 1962:66).

Several scholars followed in Austin’s footsteps and continued to investigate speech acts from a philosophical perspective. J. Searle continued in the Austinian tradition and hypothesised that we speak according to certain rules, “... talking is performing acts according to rules” (Searle 1969:22). He compared the use of language with the playing of chess. “... we can translate a chess game in one country to a chess game of another because they share the same underlying rules, so we can translate utterances of one language into another because they share the same underlying rules” (Searle 1969:40). Like Austin, Searle proposed that it is necessary to investigate the

conditions that need to be obtained in order for a speech act to be successful. (See Sadock 2005:60.) Searle distinguished between regulative and constitutive rules. “Regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, whose existence is logically independent of the rules. Constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules” (Searle 1969:34). Critics of Searle have argued that Searle’s rules are circular and that “they fail to distinguish between speech acts and that they cover only paradigm cases of speech acts” (Thomas 1995:98).

Another scholar whose works contributed to refining the notion of speech acts was H. P. Grice. Unlike Austin and Searle, Grice focused on the speaker’s intention and the hearer’s recognition of those intentions. An important distinction in Grice’s work is that between what is *said* and what is *communicated*. He focused on how we understand the propositional content that is communicated indirectly rather than just recognising the illocutionary force. Grice assumed that speakers behave according to the Cooperative Principle when communicating and thus speak in the way expected by them by their interlocutors. Grice listed a number of principles and maxims which he considered necessary for communication to be successful. Speakers exploit these maxims in order to communicate with an audience. When a speaker communicates something else than what is actually uttered, this is called implicatures (Grice 1989:24). Although both Searle and Grice and later also Sperber and Wilson (1987, 1995)’s theory, which sprung out of Grice’s maxim of relevance, have been influential in the study of speech acts, these theories will not be dealt with further in this study. Unlike Searle and Austin, my intention is not to study speech acts from a philosophical perspective, but rather from an interpragmatic point of view. Secondly, I have not set out to explain whether or not the message that the speakers wish to communicate is in fact successfully communicated, thus Grice’s theory and Sperber and Wilson’s theory, although very interesting, are irrelevant with regards to this study.

### **2.1.2 Indirectness**

There is, however, one primary question, relevant to all these theories, which is interesting in relation to my study, namely that of directness and indirectness. The question of how indirectness manifests itself has been central in the investigation of

speech acts in many, if not all, pragmatic theories. In Searle's speech act theory, an indirect speech act was one performed "by means of another" (Searle 1979 cited in Thomas 1995:93). Grice's definition of indirectness, on the other hand, is related to the flouting, exploiting and violating of maxims. Speech acts can be realised in many different ways, some direct and others indirect. Indirectness and directness can be regarded as endpoints of a continuum, on which different realisations of speech acts can be placed. I will refer to these different realisations of speech acts as *strategies*. An expression of gratitude such as *thank you for inviting me* would be more direct than *I had a wonderful evening*, which both could be expressions of gratitude, e.g. following a visit.

Indirectness occurs in all natural languages (Thomas 1995:119). Although it is considered a universal phenomenon, indirectness has shown to manifest itself differently in languages and cultures, and the circumstances in which indirectness is employed may vary significantly. This has led to indirectness/directness being the subject of several studies (see e.g. House & Kasper 1981 & Blum-Kulka & House 1989).

In their investigation of politeness markers in English and German, House and Kasper found that the German students in their experiment on the whole tended to select more direct request and complaint levels than the English participants and that this might be an indication of differing social norms operative in the two, i.e. English and German, cultural systems (House & Kasper 1981:166). Similarly, in my study, the results indicate that there are different preferences with regards to how gratitude is expressed in the different language cultures, i.e. although indirectness occurs in both the Norwegian and the English material, the circumstances in which it is used vary. Thus, I find Thomas' and House and Kasper's arguments convincing that indirectness manifests itself differently in different language cultures and that the circumstances in which indirectness is applied vary.

The fact that the norms for when directness or indirectness is applied differ from culture to culture could lead to cross-cultural difficulties. House and Kasper (1981:184) found that from an etic, 'culture-external', standpoint, the behaviour of the German speakers may be considered impolite by reference to an English norm; however, from an emic, 'culture-internal', standpoint, one would simply claim that the differential behaviour displayed by the German and English speakers may be a reflection of the fact

that the two cultural systems are organised differently, and that, e.g. complaint belonging to level 6 on the directness scale in German culture is not necessarily comparable to a level 6 complaint in English culture, “because the value of each is derived from the value it has relative to the remaining levels, and their frequency and modality of use in the particular cultural system” (Kasper & House 1981:184).

To account for the circumstances in which indirectness occurs, several scholars have formulated and used a set of social variables to describe the circumstances in which a strategy would be most advantageous. In their theory of politeness, Brown and Levinson suggest some circumstantial factors which influence the choice of speech act strategy used. They argue that speakers calculate the sum of all these factors in choosing how to produce the speech act in question (Brown & Levinson 1988:78). Brown and Levinson emphasise that these factors, distance (D), power (P), and rate of imposition (R), are not intended as actual ratings of power, etc, but concepts that are believed to be mutually assumed. Similarly, Thomas (1995:124) suggests some universal axes which govern indirectness. “The axes governing indirectness are ‘universal’ in that they capture the types of consideration likely to govern pragmatic choices in any language, but the way they are applied varies considerably from culture to culture” (Thomas 1995:124).

The first factor Brown and Levinson introduce is the social distance between speaker and hearer, i.e. a symmetric relationship between the interlocutors which refers to the degree of closeness between them. Scollon and Scollon (2001:52-53) argue that social distance can most easily be seen in egalitarian relationships, e.g. two close friends would be classified as -D because of the closeness of their relationship. On the other hand, two governmental officials of different nations are likely to be of equal power within their systems but socially distant, +D. To exemplify how a difference in social distance between the interlocutors can affect the way the speaker chooses to express him/herself, Thomas (1995:128-129) refers to a situation where a person first asks a colleague that she knows for change to the coffee machine, but later is forced to ask a colleague she does not know: “Got change of fifty pence, DB?” versus “Excuse me, could you change fifty pence for me? I need tens or fives for the coffee machine.”

According to Brown and Levinson (1988), Thomas (1995) and Scollon and Scollon (2001), speakers also consider the relative power of the speaker and the hearer,

i.e. an asymmetric relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Scollon and Scollon (2001) emphasise that power and social distance must not be confused. "... 'power' refers to the *vertical disparity* between the participants in a hierarchical structure. ...(+P, -P)" (Scollon & Scollon 2001:52, my emphasis). An example illustrating this asymmetric relationship would be the power an employer has over an employee or a teacher over a student. Thomas (1995:127) elaborates on Brown and Levinson's description of power. She mainly distinguishes between two different types of power, coercive (negative power) and reward (positive power). Additionally, she mentions three subtypes of power, legitimate power, which describes a relationship where one person has the right to request, etc, something by virtue of the person's status, age, role, etc; referent power, where one person has power over the other person because the other person admires or looks up to that person; and finally expert power, where one person has expert knowledge within an area which the other person needs.

Thirdly, Brown and Levinson, Thomas and Scollon and Scollon argue that speakers consider the ranking of the imposition in the particular culture, i.e. the degree of imposition of the act in the particular culture, to find the appropriate speech act strategy. Thomas' (1995) third dimension, size of imposition, corresponds to Brown and Levinson's rate of imposition and Scollon and Scollon's (2001) weight of imposition. Thomas refers to Goffman's (1967) notion of free and non-free goods and argues that these concepts form a good foundation for the understanding of size of imposition as a social factor (Thomas 1995:130). What an individual regards as free or non-free goods varies according to the relationship with the hearer and the situation in which the conversation occurs. Thomas argues that in one's own family home, food, drink, baths, etc. are free goods while in other people's houses they are not (Thomas 1995:130). Thomas also agrees with the argument that the notion of free and non-free goods can be extended to information as well, arguing that many British would consider it impolite to enquire directly about other people's income, religion, etc. (Thomas 1995:130). What is regarded as free or non-free goods and information is thus relative to culture. When the size of imposition is considered to be small, speakers often choose a direct speech act strategy, while when the size of imposition is considered to be great, speakers often choose a more indirect strategy. Thomas (1995:130) exemplifies this by contrasting two

requests made to her by her mother: “Shut the window, Jen” and “Do you think you could find the time to take those invitations to the printers?”. The differences in directness between these requests indicate that the speaker has considered the size of imposition to be different.

In addition to the factors presented in Brown and Levinson, Thomas adds a fourth factor, the rights and obligations between the speaker and the hearer (Thomas 1995:124). The purpose of this fourth dimension is to “explain a situation in which a speech act involving a major imposition is performed with a minimal degree of indirectness” (Thomas 1995:131). The factor determining the degree of indirectness in such situations is whether or not the speaker has the right to demand the service or the goods from the hearer and whether or not the hearer is obliged to comply. Thomas illustrates this factor by referring to two conversations she heard on a bus.

On country routes the driver stops only when requested to do so. The first woman wanted to get off at a scheduled stopping place, and as the bus approached it she simply called out: ‘Next stop, driver!’ Her companion wanted to get off where there was no official stop, and asked the driver, ‘Do you think you could possibly let me out just beyond the traffic lights, please?’ In this case, the parameters of power, social distance and size of imposition are all held constant. It cost the driver no more effort to stop at the traffic lights than at the bus stop. What changed was that in the first case the driver had an obligation to stop, in the second case he had no such obligation. (Thomas 1995:131)

Brown and Levinson (1988:83) argue that the higher the speaker judges the total weight of imposition, the more indirect the speaker’s strategy will be. They claim that every rational speaker would want to reduce the threat to his/her own face as well as the hearer’s face and thus choose the appropriate way of realising the speech act according to the estimated risk of face loss in the situation. Thomas (1995:124) argues that speakers tend to use a greater degree of indirectness with people who have more power or authority over them. The reason for this, she argues, may partly be that the hearer may have the authority to influence the speaker’s situation in some way, e.g. in an employer-employee situation, the employer has the authority to influence the employee’s career. When it comes to social distance, Thomas (1995:128) argues that speakers generally would feel less obliged to employ indirectness in e.g. making a request to a person who is familiar and/or are similar in age, sex, social class, etc, than making the same request to a complete stranger. Thomas also argues that the degree of indirectness would increase



according to the size of imposition (Thomas 1995:130). In situations where the size of imposition is great and the degree of indirectness is low, the rights and obligations factor may play a role.

Scollon and Scollon do not use the terms *indirectness* and *directness* when discussing social factors and face (Scollon & Scollon 2001:48-49). However, they maintain that the social factors influence the way we speak. Scollon and Scollon discuss *involvement* and *independence* in relation to interpersonal relations and social factors. Although not directly transferable, involvement and independence can be linked to Brown and Levinson's two aspects of face, i.e. people have the need to be involved with other people and to show them their involvement (Brown and Levinson's positive face), but also maintain a degree of independence (Brown and Levinson's negative face).

Scollon and Scollon describe three different politeness systems; deference politeness system, solidarity politeness system and hierarchical politeness system, and argue that the systems can be characterised by different ways of speaking (Scollon & Scollon 2001:54-56). Scollon and Scollon use the terms involvement and independence strategies to account for these different ways of speaking, by *strategies* they mean, as will be discussed further in section 2.1.3, ways of applying to the hearer's face. Deference politeness systems, i.e. -P and +D, are characterised by the use of independence strategies, e.g. apologies, being pessimistic, etc. An example would be *I am sorry to trouble you, but could you tell me the time?* (Scollon & Scollon 2001:51). In solidarity politeness systems (-P and -D), both speakers in a communication situation would use involvement strategies. An example of an involvement strategy could be *I know just how you feel*, i.e. claiming common point of view (Scollon & Scollon 2001:50). Finally, Scollon and Scollon discusses hierarchical politeness systems (+P and +/-D) in which the superordinate characteristically would use involvement strategies, while the subordinate would use independence strategies.

Not all scholars agree with the somewhat simplistic view that indirectness increases together with power, distance and size of imposition. Yeung (1997) performed a study to examine the formulation of requests in English and Chinese business correspondence to test whether the factors P, D and S could predict linguistic choice. Brown and Levinson postulate that all three factors have an independent effect on

politeness expressions (Brown & Levinson 1988:80), but also that they together have an impact on the choice of politeness level. In Yeung's study, each of the social factors were given a numerical value representing low, medium or high distance, imposition, etc. and to find out how the factors individually contribute to linguistic variation, the numbers were run in a statistical calculation program. Yeung found that only the factor of imposition had a statistically significant impact in the English data and that none of the factors had an impact in the Chinese data. The results showed that the three factors taken as a whole had an effect, but that the effect was not much greater than the size of imposition alone (Yeung 1997:520). Yeung argues that this may be related to the type of discourse, i.e. business correspondence, which involves the use of certain conventional expressions that perhaps would not be used in everyday face-to-face communication (Yeung 1997:520). Yeung also concludes that Brown and Levinson's framework is not applicable to the Chinese data in the study, due to the fact that there are two styles represented in the material, Classical Chinese and Modern Standard Chinese, one assumed to be more deferential than the other (Yeung 1997:520). Furthermore, Chinese appear to have a different system for the choice of polite realisations, which is not reflected by Brown and Levinson's factors (Yeung 1997:520).

The argument that indirectness cannot be said to increase along with power, distance and imposition in all situations is something my study will help to clarify as well. Although not statistically tested, the results from my study show that direct strategies were also chosen in situations where factors such as social distance, power and size of imposition were great. In some of these situations, the choice of more direct strategies could be explained by referring to Thomas' fourth social factor, i.e. rights and obligations or Wolfson's Bulge Theory of 1989, which identifies "brevity in communications between socially distant interlocutors" (Eisenstein and Bodman 1993:67). However, these explanations cannot account for all the examples which deviate from Brown and Levinson and Thomas' arguments. This may indicate that there is a culturally relative hierarchical relationship between the axes governing indirectness, i.e. that the size of imposition is considered more important than social distance when it comes to choosing a strategy in a certain situation in a certain culture, but not in the same situation in another culture. I would argue that cultural values and traditions need to be

considered in relation to these factors. I agree with the argument, presented above, that there might be some factors which govern indirectness in different cultures. However, I am reluctant to accept that the degree of indirectness increases according to the degree of social distance, power or size of imposition in all situations. Despite this problem, I have chosen to describe the situations in the DCT by referring to the social dimensions introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978) and the fourth dimension introduced by Thomas (1995) because I find the classification useful with respect to giving an overview of certain important variables in the situations and comparing positions of varying sizes in the respective language cultures.

### **2.1.3 Politeness**

Politeness theory can be seen as a way of explaining the need for indirectness. Politeness has received a lot of scholarly focus in recent years. Thomas describes this interest as being “to such an extent that politeness theory could almost be seen as a sub-discipline of pragmatics” (Thomas 1995:149). Several scholars have contributed to politeness research in order to try to explain and account for different politeness strategies and the principles that govern politeness. Leech (1983) offered a politeness principle of the same status as Grice’s cooperative principle (Grice 1967) and a set of interpersonal maxims which stand in the same relation to the politeness principle as Grice’s maxims to the cooperative principle (Thomas 1995:159). The politeness principle is based on the thought that people have a desire to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations between themselves and their interlocutors (Leech 1983:82). The maxims of Tact, Modesty, Agreement, Generosity, Approbation and Sympathy were created to account for how language is constrained by social circumstances.

The aspect of politeness research which I will concentrate on in my study is the study of face as used by Brown and Levinson (1978). Face as an anthropological phenomenon was first introduced by a Chinese anthropologist, Hu, in the 1940s, but it had been used in English long before that, in expressions such as ‘to lose face’. Scollon and Scollon argue that “the study of face in sociolinguistics arose out of the need to understand how participants decide what their relative statuses are and what language they use to encode their assumptions about such differences in status, as well as their assumption about the face being presented by participants in communication” (Scollon &

Scollon 2001:45). Face is generally defined as “the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event” (Scollon & Scollon 2001:45) or simply “‘reputation’ or ‘good name’” (Thomas 1995:168). Goffman, one of the most influential researchers on face, defined face as

the positive value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. (Goffman 2005:5)

As a contrast to other sociolinguists of his time, Goffman concentrated on ordinary everyday life and wanted to study interaction to determine the underlying processes and rituals involved in social life. Goffman concluded that every person “lives in a world of social encounters” and participate in different forms of communication (Goffman 2005:5). The participants in communication have feelings attached to their own face as well as the face of other participants. Goffman argues that “it is the rules of the group and the definition of the situation which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is distributed among the faces involved” (Goffman 2005:6). He points out that the speaker needs to be conscious of the world outside the current speech event as well, in order to maintain his/her face (Goffman 2005:9). Goffman focuses on the speaker as a ‘social operator’ who acts in a way that will secure social order.

Goffman’s groundbreaking works on face have been the foundation of several theories and studies of face and interaction in the years following their publication. However, some theorists have offered criticism to Goffman’s models and claimed that they are too anglo-centric (Gray 2005:21). Gray refers to previous studies which have illustrated that focusing on others’ needs is related to interdependence and cultural as well as individual traits and not necessarily the rituals Goffman describes in his works. (See Kazuya Hara & Min-Sun Kim 2004.) Goffman argues that

just as the member of any group is expected to have self-respect, so also he is expected to sustain a standard of considerateness; he is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present, and he is expected to do this willingly and spontaneously because of emotional identification with the others and with their feelings. In consequence, he is disinclined to witness the defacement of others. (Goffman 1967 cited in Gray 2005:21)

Gray describes these as emic descriptions which are characteristic for the US, but which cannot automatically be transferred into other cultures (Gray 2005:21). Despite this criticism, I, along with Gray, find Goffman's concept of *face* very useful when describing differences in pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behaviour between different cultures, because a very important part of conversation is to maintain a harmonious relationship between interlocutors and the concept of *face* and *face* terminology help to account for the measures speakers take when considering their interlocutor's feelings and self-image. Although Goffman's theory may have certain flaws (hence Kazuya Hara & Min-Sun Kim 2004 above), I find Goffman's observations and thoughts on human interaction in everyday life useful with regards to accounting for some of the results in my material.

Based on Goffman's account of face, Brown and Levinson formed an analytical framework for the investigation of utterances to try to explain the reasons for polite behaviour in speech. They aimed at constructing a universal theory which would apply to different language cultures and account for the strategies people use when being polite. Up until now, I have used the term *strategy* in the sense of 'realisation of a speech act'. However, Brown and Levinson use the term *strategy* in a different way. Brown and Levinson's *strategies* refer to different measures speakers can take to limit the risk of damaging the speaker or the hearer's face. Thus, when discussing Brown and Levinson's theory below, I will refer to such measures as *strategies*.

Brown and Levinson's definition of face includes not only how we view ourselves, our self-image, but our basic wants as well. They describe face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects. ... Negative face: the want of 'every competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others; Positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson 1999:321-322). Brown and Levinson acknowledge that the concept of *face* may be culturally dependant, but assume that "the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal" (Brown & Levinson 1999:322).

Brown and Levinson introduced the term 'Face Threatening Act', FTA, as referring to speech acts which run contrary to the participants' face wants, i.e. threaten or danger the hearer or the speaker's face (Brown and Levinson 1999:323). The speaker

then has the opportunity to choose among certain strategies to minimise the threat. Brown and Levinson distinguish between acts which threaten positive face and acts which threaten negative face and acts which threaten the hearer's face and acts which threaten the speaker's face. A speech act such as thanking, for instance, offends the speaker's negative face. The speaker accepts a debt and thus humbles his/her own face (Brown and Levinson 1988:67). There are several different strategies one could use to perform an FTA. One can perform an FTA on record, which means that the communicative intention is clear to the hearer. One can choose to perform the on record FTA boldly or with redress. By doing it boldly, one is stating one's intention as directly as possible. If one chooses to state it with redress, on the other hand, one considers the hearer's face and modifies the statement according to which face, positive or negative, which is being stressed (Brown & Levinson 1999:327-328). Another possibility is to perform the FTA off record, i.e. indirectly. One may also choose not to perform an FTA altogether.

Brown and Levinson constructed a formula intended to calculate the total weight of the FTA in different cultures:

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$$

$W_x$  is the value that measures the weight of the FTA,  $D(S,H)$  is the value that measures the social distance,  $P(H, S)$  is the value that measures the power that the hearer has over the speaker and  $R_x$  is the value that measures the degree to which the FTA ( $x$ ) is an imposition in the particular culture. Brown and Levinson argue that the stronger the seriousness of the FTA, the more polite the strategy the speaker will choose will be. The formula also considers that the weight of the FTA may vary according to different cultures. Gray (2005:25) gives an example of how a speech act may be face threatening in one culture, but not in another. Gray argues that in Norway, it is completely acceptable to admit that you do not know anything about a certain subject. In Japan, however, that would be seen as embarrassing and threatening to one's own face.

Based on the calculation of the social factors determining the total weight of imposition, the speaker chooses the appropriate strategy in the situation. Within each strategy, Brown and Levinson list range of different ways in which the speaker could realise the different strategies. For instance, when expressing gratitude, one of the options the speaker has is to go off record, thus be indirect. Sadock gives an example of a non-

conventionalised off-record strategy, e.g. *Oh, I love chocolates*. “There is no convention of English to the effect that stating that one loves chocolates counts as an act of thanking” (Sadock 2005:53) yet, this expression may function as an expression of gratitude. By performing a speech act off record, as illustrated by Sadock, the speaker reduces the humiliation of his own face, but risks that the hearer does not understand the force. Similarly, Sadock underlines that in cases like these the speaker’s intentions are important and that the hearer’s recognition of these intentions is crucial (Sadock 2005:53), which often is the cause of cross-cultural communicative failure.

The reasons for choosing to perform or not to perform an FTA are many. However, the underlying desire is to maintain a good relationship with your interlocutor. Brown and Levinson introduce two ‘types’ of politeness which explain two different ways of satisfying the interlocutors face wants, i.e. positive politeness and negative politeness (Brown & Levinson 1988:101). Positive politeness applies to the hearer’s positive aspects of face, i.e. his/her desire to be liked, approved of, etc. One way to do this is, as Brown and Levinson suggest, to claim common ground by using in-group identity markers (Brown and Levinson 1988:108-109), e.g. *Help me with this bag here, will you love?* (Brown & Levinson 1988:108). When using negative politeness, the speaker applies to the hearer’s negative face, i.e. his/her right not to be imposed on. One way of applying to the hearer’s negative face is to apologise, e.g. *I am sorry to bother you but...* (Brown & Levinson 1988:189).

Brown and Levinson introduce fifteen different strategies between which a speaker can choose to apply to his/her interlocutor’s positive face wants (Brown & Levinson 1988:102). The strategies can be divided into three main categories, i.e. “claim ‘common ground’” as by e.g. using identity markers as illustrated above, “convey that S and H are co-operators” e.g. by including the hearer in the activity, e.g. *Let’s stop for a bite* instead of *I want a bite, so let’s stop* (Brown & Levinson 1988:127) and “fulfil H’s want (for some X)” e.g. by giving the hearer a gift which shows that the speaker knows what the hearer wants and thus wants these wants to be fulfilled (Brown and Levinson 1988:129). Brown and Levinson also introduce ten strategies which apply to the negative aspect of face (Brown & Levinson 1988:131). The negative strategies can be grouped into five categories, i.e. “be direct”, “do not presume/assume (about H’s wants)” e.g. by

hedging e.g. *I suppose that Harry is coming* (Brown and Levinson 1988:145), “do not coerce H (where x involves H doing A)” e.g. by being pessimistic, e.g. *You don’t have any manila envelopes, do you by any chance?*, “communicate S’s want not to impinge on H” e.g. by apologising as exemplified above, and “redress other wants of H’s, derivative from negative face” e.g. by incurring a debt, e.g. *I’d be eternally grateful if you would...* (Brown & Levinson 1988:210).

Brown and Levinson (1999:329-330) also suggest several “pay-offs” associated with the different strategies i.e. what the speaker can achieve by speaking in a certain way or not speaking at all. Brown and Levinson argue that the pay-off for choosing the fifth strategy, not to perform the FTA altogether, is that the speaker avoids offending the hearer, but that the speaker thus fails to achieve his/her desired goal (Brown & Levinson 1988:72), e.g. if the speaker chooses not to request something from the hearer, the speaker reduces the risk of offending the hearer, but simultaneously, does not achieve his/her goal. However, the speech act of thanking differs in some respects from other speech acts. Brown and Levinson fail to mention that not expressing thanks, i.e. not performing the FTA of thanking, may in fact be threatening to the hearer’s positive face, i.e. the speaker’s desire to be appreciated. Thanking always occurs together with an act done in the past or that is being offered to do in the future and not expressing gratitude of such an act would indicate that you expect the other person to do it. If, however, the other person has no obligation to do it, not expressing gratitude would threaten their right not to be imposed on, i.e. the hearer’s negative face. Thus, by thanking the speaker indicates that he/she values the act done by the hearer and in that way saves the hearer’s positive face. Consequently, one might argue that opting out is in fact the threatening act with regards to thanking as opposed to e.g. requests. Thanking, according to Brown and Levinson (1988:67), offends the speaker’s negative face, because by thanking the speaker accepts a debt and thus humbles his/her own face. However, in my view, thanking must also have the function of saving or applying to the hearer’s face somehow, otherwise speakers would generally try to avoid it and avoid threatening their own face. This may be explained by referring to Brown and Levinson’s use of the term strategies, as mentioned above. On one level, thanking is a speech act which, when performed, threatens the speaker’s negative face. However, on another level, expressing thanks is a



strategy, i.e. a measure taken by the speaker to apply to the hearer's face. Thanking, thus, functions on two different levels, i.e. thanking offends the speaker's face, but simultaneously also attends to the hearer's wants.

In my discussion of the data in this study, I will draw on different aspects of Brown and Levinson's theory. I will consider the different social factors and how they seem to influence the realisation of the speech act of thanking. Secondly, I will also consider the distinction between positive and negative politeness strategies when discussing what aspects of face which are valued in the Norwegian and English language cultures. Considerations of the speaker's own face and the face of the speaker's interlocutor were central in my material in the choosing of strategies and whether to perform an FTA or not.

Although Brown and Levinson's theory may be very useful when discussing politeness and different realisations of speech acts, the theory has also been exposed to a lot of criticism that needs to be considered. In an article published in 2002, Spencer-Oatey discusses different key-issues in politeness theory. She considers the diverse foundations of the different politeness models and whether they should be seen as alternative explanations or be linked together. Spencer-Oatey also mentions another perspective on politeness, i.e. that of Fraser (1990 cited in Spencer-Oatey, 2002:531). Fraser introduces the concept of *conversational contract* which means that the participants in a conversation have an understanding of rules and of what they can expect from the other participants when they start communicating.

Moreover, Spencer-Oatey discusses the different reasons why speech acts are considered interpersonally sensitive. She argues that the different theoretical models provide different answers to this question. Brown and Levinson connect it to face threatening acts and how certain speech acts threaten people's negative face, i.e. their desire not to be impeded upon. Leech argues that if the speaker violates the maxims the hearer will have problems 'decoding' the message and this will cause inconvenience, etc. Based on the results of a preliminary study of a number of Chinese students' reports of sensitive incidents and earlier politeness research, Spencer-Oatey concludes that relational management is affected by several factors (2002:539). In light of this, she argues that we need to consider both the social, interdependent aspect and the individual,

independent aspect of face and suggests that face has two interrelated aspects *quality face* and *social identity face*. “Quality face: We have a fundamental desire for people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities ... Social identity face: We have a fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identity roles ...” (Spencer-Oatey 2002:540). Spencer-Oatey emphasises that we need to consider sociality rights as well. She defines sociality rights as “the fundamental personal/social entitlements that a person effectively claims for him/herself in his/her interaction with others” (Spencer-Oatey 2002:540). She goes on to state that sociality rights have two interrelated aspects, equity rights and association rights, which means that we have the right to personal consideration from others and that we are entitled to (interactional) association with others, respectively.

Spencer-Oatey argues that Brown and Levinson’s concept of *face* is too limited. She refers to Matsumoto’s criticism of Brown and Levinson and states that “they have over-emphasized the notion of individual freedom and autonomy, and that they have ignored the interpersonal or social perspective on face” (Spencer-Oatey 2002:532). The social aspect of face as explained by Gao 1996 (cited in Spencer-Oatey 2002:533) “face need is not only a personal concern but, more important, a collective concern ...”. In many cultures, people have a much stronger sense of group/family belonging and identity is much more closely attached to the group. Thus what you do will have repercussions for the face of your group. Spencer-Oatey emphasises, as do Fraser and Nolan, that the performance of speech acts cannot be analysed outside the social context in which they occur: “... politeness is a social judgement, and whether or not an utterance is heard as being polite is, to a large extent in the hands (or ears) of the hearer (Fraser & Nolan, 1981:96). This means that we cannot sensibly divorce linguistic politeness from the social context in which it occurs” (Spencer-Oatey 2002:533). In my opinion, Brown and Levinson’s description of a person’s face and face wants covers a great deal of the individual aspect of face, which is the aspect of face relevant to my study. Norwegian culture is very individualistic, just like American and British culture thus the social aspect of face as Spencer-Oatey discusses, may not be as relevant in a study of politeness in these cultures, as opposed to other more collective cultures. Therefore, I have not taken the social aspects of face into consideration here. However, I agree with some of the

criticism provided by Spencer-Oatey. I would argue that culture and the social context in which a speech act occurs need to be considered in connection with politeness and thus I agree with Spencer-Oatey's argument that politeness cannot be divorced from its social context. Consequently, I have included culture as a part of my discussion of politeness, in addition to the individual aspects of face as described by Brown and Levinson.

Gray (2005) also recites some of the criticism towards Brown and Levinson's theory. He points out that their effort to create a universal politeness theory may have failed and that the theory cannot account for politeness in all languages. In some cultures, speakers may not always have a choice when it comes to polite behaviour. Sometimes, a speaker may choose to be polite to reach a certain goal, but in other situations the speaker may act politely due to social rules and in those cases is unable to make an independent choice (Gray 2005:25). Yeung (1997:510) exemplifies this by referring to Chinese culture, which is normative rather than strategic in nature, and that appropriate display of politeness in certain context is obligatory. Thus it is difficult to see politeness as a set of strategies from which a speaker can choose. Similarly, Eelen (2001) argues that Brown and Levinson's theory, among other theories, e.g. Leech's (1983), is too closely centred on the speaker and his/her options and that the hearer needs to be considered as well. In my opinion, the fact that not all speakers are able to choose among participants is not necessarily a problem for Brown and Levinson's theory. The theory sets out to explain politeness principles in human interaction and to explain the various strategies speakers may use to act politely, irrespective of the individual speaker's goal. I find criticism, such as that of Eelen (2001), valid and important to consider. However, neither Eelen nor Gray proposes a better alternative to these theories. Thus, I support Gray's argument that despite any criticism or limitations, the concept of *face* and *face work* is the most useful tool in accounting for politeness in general and cross-cultural politeness in particular (Gray 2005:20).

Similarly to the criticism referred to in Gray (2005), Wierzbicka argues that the metalanguage used in theories such as that of Brown and Levinson, is inherently anglo-centric and thus difficult to use when describing other languages and cultures. She exemplifies this by referring to the directness/indirectness distinction discussed in Brown and Levinson. (See Brown & Levinson 1988:130-141.) "... In Polish, politeness is not

linked with an avoidance of imperative, and with the use of interrogative devices, as it is in English” Wierzbicka 1991:34). However, Wierzbicka does not discard these theories altogether, but suggests using semantic metalanguage based on universal semantic primitives to show both similarities and differences between different speech acts (Wierzbicka 1991:153). She argues that “we cannot enter the ‘assumptive world of others’ if we try to rely on culture-specific, complex, and obscure concepts such as ‘directness’, ‘self-assertion’, ‘solidarity’ or ‘harmony’; but one can do it if we rely, instead, on lexical universals such as *want*, *think*, *say* or *know*” (Wierzbicka 1991:129). Gray and Wierzbicka emphasise an important point to consider in cross-cultural research, i.e. the role of terminology. However, to formulate a new set of terminology, as Wierzbicka suggests, is beyond the purpose of this study and, consequently, I have chosen to maintain the traditional terms such as *indirectness*, etc. I also suspect that this will not cause any significant problems in the analysis of my material, due to the fact that Norwegian and English derive from the same branch of the Indo-European language family and thus have many common words and concepts.

Brown and Levinson argue that their definition of face, which consists of two kinds of desires, is universal, but that this merely is “the bare bones of a notion of face” (Brown & Levinson 1988:13) and that every culture needs to elaborate on this subject. I hope to contribute to this with regards to how politeness is reflected in Norway, thus I will use Brown and Levinson’s theory in the discussion of my results. Another reason for my choice is that their theory is more economic than other theories, e.g. Leech’s theory. One of the criticisms towards Leech’s (1983) theory of politeness has been that there seems to be no way of restricting the number of maxims (see e.g. Thomas 1995:167). Finally, I also find it useful to use the term *face* to explain why speakers choose certain strategies or avoid using certain strategies when expressing gratitude in different cultures. In my opinion, *face* captures different values in different cultures in a satisfactory way. When analysing the material for this study I noticed a tendency in the material produced by Norwegian speakers, which did not occur as frequently in the material produced by the British participants or by the participants which participated in Eisenstein and Bodman’s studies. It seemed as if the Norwegian and the British and American participants valued

certain aspects of face differently, i.e. that the negative face wants of the hearer are more highly valued in Norwegian than in the English-speaking countries.

Further criticism of Brown and Levinson has been related to culture, e.g. the criticism offered by Mills (2003). She argues that Brown and Levinson fail to analyse politeness beyond the scope of the sentence. She emphasises the role of culture within politeness research and argues that what is polite or impolite is determined by social norms and practices and cannot be seen as inherent meanings of sentences. One flaw in Brown and Levinson's theory, in Mills' opinion, is that they assume that politeness resides within linguistic forms and that it is not a product of interaction within a particular community. Mills' view on politeness is that it cannot be seen as a property of utterances nor as a set of choices made by individual speakers, but "as a set of practices or strategies which communities of practice develop, affirm, and contest, and which the individuals within these communities engage with in order to come to an assessment of their own and others' behaviour and position within the group" (Mills 2003:9). She argues that the production of polite expressions is a complex process involving the speaker hypothesising a 'common world' to which he/she belongs and in which he/she has a certain position (Mills 2003:36). Similarly, Eelen argues that politeness reflects different cultural norms and that politeness needs to be considered as a cultural phenomenon (2001:164).

As Mills (2003) and Eelen (2001) suggest, I consider culture as an important part of politeness research and that the distinction between emic and etic views on linguistic behaviour is important in the comparison of such behaviour. Culture and politeness is also related to interlanguage pragmatics, a subsection within the field of pragmatics, which is particularly relevant in relation to my study. Interlanguage pragmatics is defined as "the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993:3). The "linguistic action patterns" and "social constraints" referred to above are the results of the relationship between culture and language and have to be taken into consideration by non-native speakers if they wish to communicate successfully. I consider it important not to disregard the role of culture and cultural norms in the study of communication, though 'culture' is a term which may cause more problems than it actually solves. There is a range of definitions of culture, e.g.

“the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group”; “the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time”; and “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization” (*Merriam Webster’s Dictionary*). However, although we accept one of these definitions of culture, it is difficult to assign one specific culture to a whole speech community. Throughout this paper, I will refer to Norwegian and English (American and British) cultures. However, claiming that people belong to one culture is not unproblematic, because one may feel that one belongs to several culture and subcultures. Nor is it acceptable to uncritically equate culture and language culture. As Gray points out, a language culture may consist of several cultures (2005:34). Furthermore, we have to consider that typical cultural values must be seen as hypotheses, because we cannot determine what goes on in people’s minds (Fife 2000:68). Along with Fife, Gray also underlines the importance of individuality in his discussion of culture. He points out that the members of a group/culture are first and foremost individuals and become members of that group/culture by relating to the identity of the group/culture (Gray 2005:15). Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that culture changes constantly and that it also may be influenced by other cultures and our individual preferences and goals.

Despite these difficulties regarding the concept of *culture*, I will refer to cultural differences to try to explain some of the diversity in my material when I go on to discuss the results of my study. I side with Scollon and Scollon’s account of culture and the problems around it. They argue that

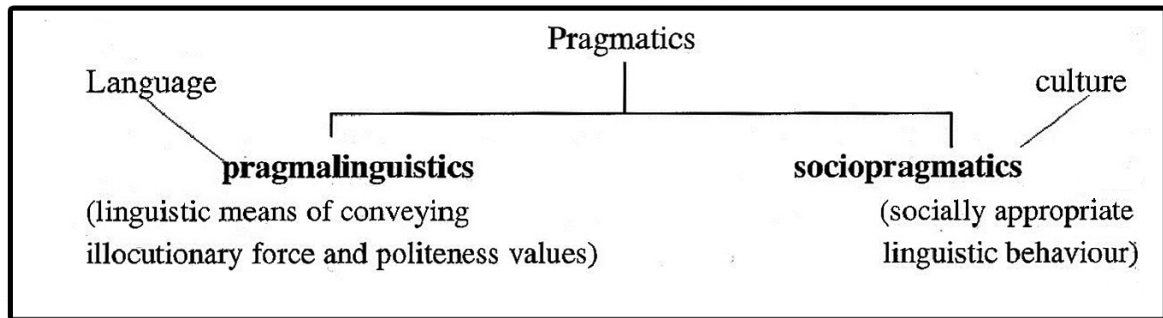
in studies of intercultural communication, our concern is not with high culture, but with anthropological culture. When we use the word ‘culture’ in its anthropological sense, we mean to say that culture is any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group. By using the anthropological sense of the word “culture”, we mean to consider any aspect of the ideas, communications, or behaviors of a group of people which gives them a distinctive identity and which is used to organize their internal sense of cohesion and membership (Scollon & Scollon 2001:139-140).

Scollon and Scollon argue that even though culture may be a difficult term to use, it may be useful to talk about “large groups of people and what they have in common, from their history and worldview to their language or languages or geographical location” (Scollon

& Scollon 2001:138), i.e. referring to a collective group with certain traits in common is useful in a cross-cultural study. In my study, both groups of participants can be considered as a part of a student culture. They are all attending University. They also share the same language background or mother tongue, i.e. Norwegian and English respectively, and may thus also feel like belonging to the same group or culture. Røkaas included participants with similar educational background in her investigation of requests made by Norwegians and Americans in 2000. I have adopted the same approach. In her study, her informants were mainly undergraduate business students at the Norwegian School of Management BI from the Oslo region and undergraduate business students at the Haas School of Business at the University of California Berkeley.

Culture and language are often viewed as interdependent and even inseparable. In my opinion, cultural values may contribute to explaining why speakers chose to express themselves the way they do. I believe that language, as well as culture(s) can be seen as parts of a speaker's identity in the way that Preisler describes it. In his book about Danes and their relationship to the English language, he says "For at forstå dette [språklig påvirkning] må man kende grundprincippet for forholdet mellem sprog og samfund: sproget er ikke blot et meddelelsesmiddel – sprogets form og udtale er en del af den enkelte sprogbrugers identitet" (Preisler 1999:14). The culture of a country, region, or a particular social group is reflected in their way of speaking and thus may have an effect on how the speakers learn and use a second language. Gadamer (1960, cited in Svanes 1991:44) argues that cultural differences may have an influence on the learning of a second language and that speakers who share some aspects of the L2 culture may find it easier to learn the language. Thus learners who have a "Vorverstandnis" (= 'preunderstanding') of the L2 culture will have fewer problems learning the language. Bou Franch (1998:8) illustrates the relationship between language and culture in figure 1.

Figure 1 The pragmatic continuum



*The pragmatic continuum: language - culture.  
(Based on Leech 1983 & Thomas 1983)*

As the illustration shows, culture and language may be seen as the endpoints of a continuum. Culture is connected to pragmatic performance and how we as speakers understand pragmatic practices and politeness. Geis and Harlow (1996:150) define language culture as being a pattern of social expectations associated with a particular, homogeneous subgroup of speakers of a language. Speakers use their experiences to understand and interpret new speech situations (Glomnes 1991:60). Glomnes points out that communication means to interact or do something together, and that it is important that the participants communicating speak the same language both literally and figuratively.

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper refer to several studies which prove how different cultures may lead to different speech patterns. One of the studies they refer to is Wolfson's 1981 study of compliments in American English. Her results show that Americans pay compliments in situations where complimenting would be inappropriate in other cultures (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:5). They argue that results such as those of Wolfson support the work of Gumperz and his associates, "which shows that cross-cultural differences in expectations of linguistic behavior, interpretative strategies, and signalling devices can lead to breakdowns in interethnic communication" (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:6). Similar results were found by Eisenstein and Bodman in their study of thanking strategies as used by learners of English. Eisenstein and Bodman conclude that "in our judgement, socio-pragmatic limitations were more severe [than pragmalinguistic limitations] because the socio-cultural incongruities they revealed



created the potential for more serious misunderstandings” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:176).

In order for communication in a second language to be successful, learners need to be able to use the appropriate forms at the appropriate time. Leech makes an important distinction between *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. He describes pragmalinguistics as “the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech 1983:11) while sociopragmatics deals with how pragmatic performance is determined by social conditions and culture. The social conditions referred to here are for instance social distance, power relations, degree of imposition, etc. Wierzbicka underlines that individual factors are also important in pragmatic performance. “They [modes of interaction] depend partly on what you and I feel and want at a particular time; but they depend also on who you and I are – both as members of particular social, cultural and ethnic groups” (Wierzbicka 1991:2). As Preisler points out above, the way speakers express themselves may be closely related to who they are, i.e. their personality, etc.

#### **2.1.4 Aijmer’s (1996) classification of thanking strategies**

To account for the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic practices and how politeness is reflected in Norwegian and English in my material, I will refer to Aijmer’s description and categorisation of thanking expressions. As I discussed above, I have used the term *strategy* in the sense of ‘realisation of a speech act’. However, as I pointed out, *strategies* may also refer to measures a speaker can take to maintain a harmonious relationship between him/herself and the interlocutor, as in Brown and Levinson’s theory. It is important that these two uses of the term *strategy* are kept distinct. In the following section, I will return to my original use of *strategy*, i.e. the realisation of a speech act. Aijmer (1996) presents a detailed overview of the different realisations and functions gratitude expressions may have. In order to explain why some speech acts can be expressed in so many ways, Aijmer argues that we need to “go beyond the illocutionary point of the particular speech act and consider its affective value or politeness” (Aijmer

1996:35). Thanking is classified as having a convivial function (Leech 1983 in Aijmer 1996:35) and “when the illocutionary force is convivial, politeness consists in maximizing politeness” (Aijmer 1996:35). This is typically done by the use of intensifiers, special prosodic patterns or by emphasis through repetition or combination of strategies (Aijmer 1996:35).

Aijmer’s classification is based on Leech’s system of politeness which is based on speech act theory as presented by Austin and Searle and the theory of conversational implicature by Grice. Leech created a politeness principle which states that speakers should minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs (Leech 1983). Leech’s politeness principle can be seen as an explanation of why people do not always observe Grice’s cooperative principle, i.e. why people are indirect in conveying what they mean (Leech 1983:80).

Whereas Brown and Levinson argue that the primary motivation for acting polite is the regard for face, Leech argues that the reason for acting outside the cooperative principle is to “maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place” (Leech 1983:82). Closely related to the politeness principle are Leech’s maxims of Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy. The Tact maxim generally states that the speaker should reduce the cost and increase the benefit for the hearer (Leech 1983:107). The Generosity maxim states that the speaker should minimize the benefit to him/herself and maximize the cost to him/herself (Leech 1983:132). The Approbation maxim states that the speaker should minimize the dispraise of the hearer and maximize the praise of the hearer (Leech 1983:132). The Modesty maxim states that the speaker should minimize the praise of him/herself and maximize the dispraise of him/herself (Leech 1983:132). The Agreement maxim states that the speaker should minimize disagreement between him/herself and the hearer and maximize the agreement between the two (Leech 1983:132). Finally, the Sympathy maxim states that the speaker should minimize antipathy between the speaker and the hearer and maximize sympathy between the two (Leech 1983:132).

Brown and Levinson’s theory and Leech’s theory have usually been seen as alternative explanations of politeness. However, Spencer-Oatey argues that they can be

seen as complementary (Spencer-Oatey 2002:531). She points out that the politeness maxims proposed by Leech may be regarded as pragmatic constraints which help manage the potentially conflicting face wants (Spencer-Oatey 2002:531). Another argument which may indicate that speech acts are seen from two different angles by the two theories is that acts which threaten face tend to be put in indirect form, whereas acts that “build up” or save face (or is a strategy to counteract another face threatening act) will be more direct, i.e. maximized as Leech suggests (Leech 1983:108). This may be illustrated by the following sentences: *Have a piece of cake* and *Could you possibly cut me a piece of cake?* The first sentence is “less polite” and more direct because it benefits the hearer, whereas the second sentence is more indirect and more “polite” because it is considered a cost to the hearer. However, the picture is not clear-cut and calls for a detailed comparison of the two theories.

In my study, I have stated that I will use Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness, but I support Spencer-Oatey’s suggestion that they two theories may complement each other. Although Aijmer’s classification, which is used in the analysis of my data, is based on Leech’s theory of politeness, I do not see any major problems in using this classification here. Secondly, since linguists have argued that the two theories can be seen as complementing each other (see e.g. Watts 1989, Spencer-Oatey 2002), I have tried to relate Aijmer’s classification to Brown and Levinson’s concept of *face* and *face threatening acts*.

In her work, Aijmer outlines eight thanking strategies, i.e. ways of realising the speech act of thanking, based on Haverkate’s work (Haverkate 1984, cited in Aijmer 1996:36-37), into which different types of gratitude expressions would fall. As is shown in Figure 2 below, Aijmer illustrates different ways of reinforcing these strategies; lexical, prosodic and other, of which lexical reinforcing and ‘other’ ways of reinforcement will be relevant in this study. She also introduces an overview of the classification of thanking strategies and a code to the different categories. As, shown in illustration 3 below, Aijmer distinguishes between explicit and implicit strategies. This distinction is related to indirectness, discussed in section 2.1.2 above. The strategies referred to as explicit would be on the ‘direct’ side on the continuum of directness and

indirectness and doing an FTA on record. Aijmer's implicit strategies would correspond to Brown and Levinson's category of FTAs performed off record.

Figure 2 Overview of Aijmer's strategies

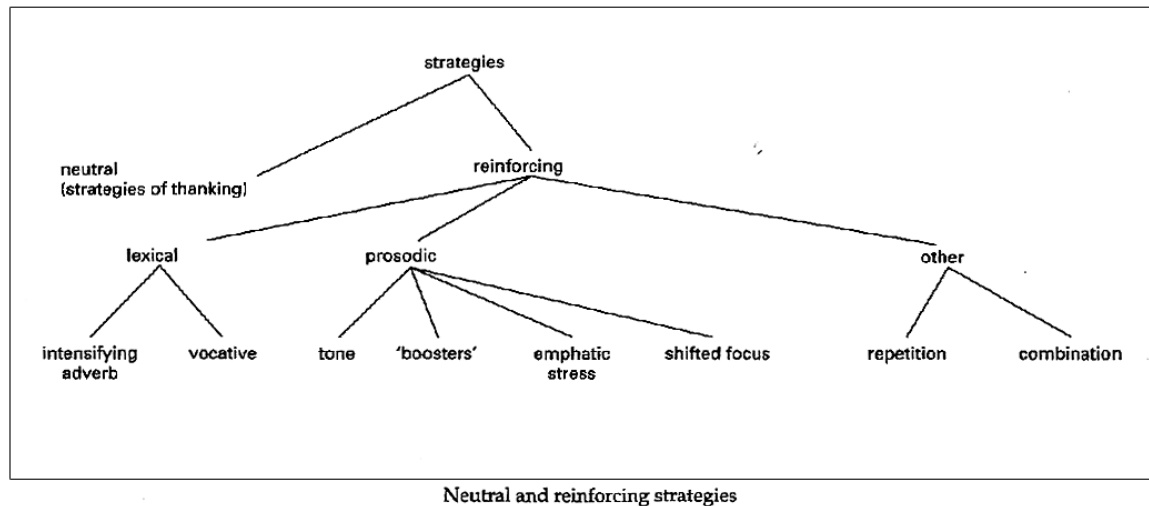
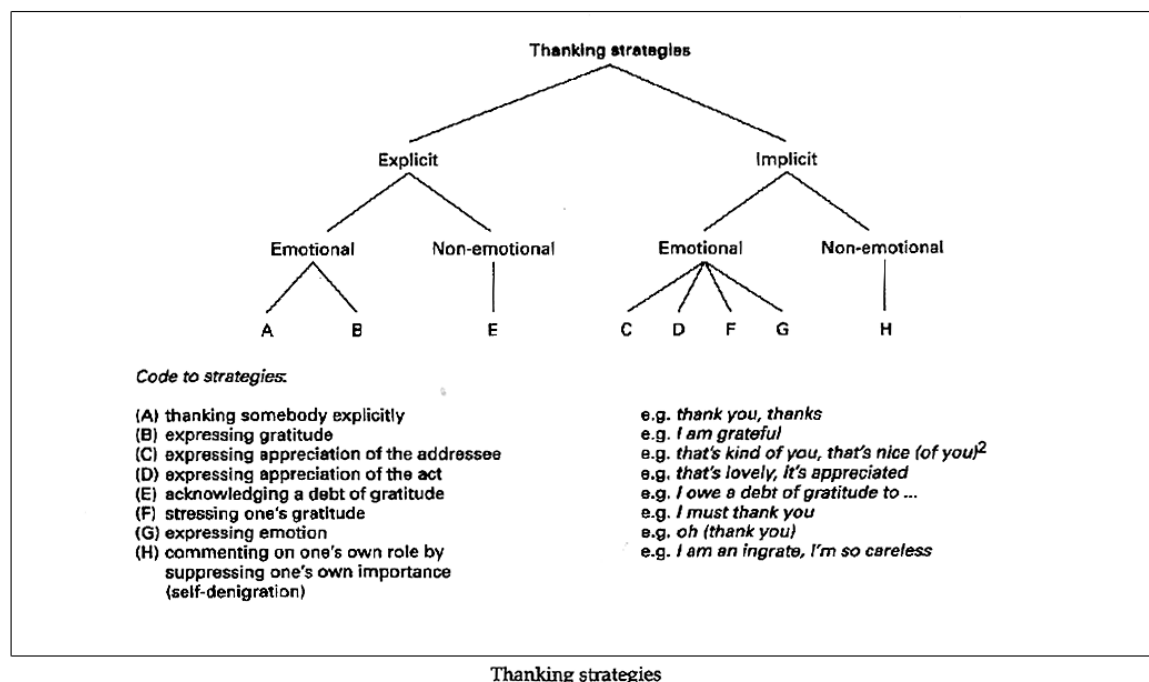


Figure 3 Description of Aijmer's strategies



Aijmer investigated the frequency of the different strategies in the London-Lund Corpus. Her findings show that strategy A was by far the most common strategy in the corpus, whereas the other strategies were rather rare (Aijmer 1996:38). She reports that strategies

A and B are the most direct strategies. However, B only occurred three times in the corpus (1996:38). Aijmer goes on to explain strategies C and D, which “refer to the felicity conditions or rules for thanking. The person who has received a favour feels grateful and expresses appreciation either of the benefactor (C) or of the act itself (D)” (Aijmer 1996:38). Strategy E, Aijmer explains by giving examples such as “I owe a lasting debt of gratitude to my late teacher...” (Aijmer 1996:38). When performing strategy E, the speaker recognises his/her indebtedness and repays by thanking. Aijmer states that strategy F is mostly used in formal contexts and includes a performative verb, e.g. “I /hereby/ thank you for...” (Aijmer 1996:38). Strategy G is the expression of emotions, while strategy H involves the speaker suppressing his/her own importance. Aijmer notes that strategy H was only found in writing and always in combination with other strategies (Aijmer 1996:38).

Aijmer’s strategies can also be explained in terms of Brown and Levinson’s different types of politeness, i.e. positive and negative politeness. As I discussed in section 2.1.3, Brown and Levinson suggest a series of strategies (measures that the speaker can take in order to satisfy the hearer’s face wants), which I have applied to Aijmer’s categories. Showing appreciation for the act, the hearer and the object would be positive politeness, according to Brown and Levinson’s measures. Thanking someone explicitly or stressing one’s own gratitude, although it threatens the speaker’s negative face, in my opinion, apply to the hearer’s positive face and thus is positive politeness. The third explicit strategy in Aijmer’s categorisation, acknowledging a debt of gratitude, which did not occur in my material, could be regarded as negative politeness complying with Brown and Levinson’s tenth strategy of negative politeness, i.e. ‘go on record as incurring a debt’ (Brown & Levinson 1988:209). Similarly, Aijmer’s final category, self-denigration, would apply to the hearer’s negative face. In my view, Aijmer’s category of expressing emotions would comply with Brown and Levinson’s ways of expressing positive politeness. They state that perhaps the only feature that distinguishes positive-politeness redress from normal everyday conversation behaviour is an element of exaggeration (Brown & Levinson 1988:101). Expressing emotion is one way of putting emphasis on or exaggerating the speaker’s feelings towards the hearer, i.e. Aijmer’s category G.

Some of the responses in my data did not fit into Aijmer's categories. These will be presented in more detail in chapter 3. Examples of such responses were acknowledgement of debt and promise to repay, which also can be commented on using in terms of Brown and Levinson's framework. Expressing indebtedness and promise to repay seem to me to be indirect ways of attending to the hearer's negative face by threatening your own negative face. Brown and Levinson state that going on record as incurring a debt would be one way redressing an FTA by applying to the hearer's negative face (Brown & Levinson 1988:210). Similarly, Brown and Levinson argue that by making a promise, i.e. when the speaker commits him/herself to a future act for the hearer's benefit; apply to the hearer's negative face. By making a promise or acknowledging a debt, the speaker put pressure on the hearer to accept or reject the act and thus threatens his/her right not to be impinged on (Brown & Levinson 1988:66).

I have considered Aijmer's categories as a starting point in the classification of my material. Aijmer points out that the categories must not be seen as a fixed set (Aijmer 1996:38) and thus I have opened for other categories and terminology in my classification. To classify the responses which did not fit into Aijmer's set of categories, I have used terminology described in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles or my own tentative terminology. Eisenstein and Bodman do not give a detailed description of their terminology, but simply state that it is based on terminology used by van Ek (1976) and Searle (1969). The classification will be discussed further in the method chapter.

## ***2.2 Second Language Acquisition of pragmatic competence***

In the introduction I stated that I would touch upon two areas of linguistic research, namely pragmatics/interlanguage pragmatics and second language acquisition, SLA. Second language acquisition is often defined as the study of "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom" (Ellis 1997:3). However, there may be some problems when defining the notion of acquisition, because it is difficult to determine exactly when a person has acquired a certain language feature. Ellis (1997:11) argues that learners may manifest target-like use of a feature without having acquired the ability to use the feature productively. Secondly,

learners may use a feature correctly, but not in a socially appropriate manner, or they may overuse a grammatical structure. Thanking as an expression of gratitude often involves fixed expressions which learners of a second language learn relatively quickly, due to the social importance. However, there may be situations where other linguistic forms are more appropriate or where intensification is needed and where learners experience problems. The data I have collected indicate that Norwegian learners of English are familiar with several of the gratitude expressions used in English, but not always when to use them.

The Norwegian EFL learners who participated in my study were thought to have a relatively high grammatical competence in English. However, in Eisenstein and Bodman's study, learners who exhibited high proficiency in English according to traditional measures showed poor pragmatic competence (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:176). There has been some disagreement with regards to the relationship between grammar and pragmatics. Grammar has been discussed as one of the factors that may influence pragmatic development, but pragmatic abilities have also been considered as an independent element in SLA research. Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei performed a study where a group of learners of English as a second language (ESL) in the US and a group of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Hungary were asked to evaluate utterances in a dialogue. The students were to judge whether the utterances were correct or incorrect and if they judged them incorrect, they were to assess the severity of the problem. The results showed that the ESL learners found more pragmatic errors and rated them more severe, while the EFL learners found more grammatical errors and rated them more severe (Kasper 2001:505). Niezgodna and Röver performed a similar study in 2001 which showed similar results. Kasper (2001:505) emphasises that the results of these studies "strongly suggest that pragmatic and grammatical awareness are largely independent".

Kasper reports that the studies which have investigated the relationship between pragmalinguistic ability and grammatical ability have had two different outcomes (Kasper 2001:506). One line of results documents that learners acquire grammatical features before they learn to use them in a pragmatically correct way, while the other line of results documents that learners acquire pragmalinguistic features before they learn to

use them in a grammatically correct way. The “grammar precedes pragmatics scenario” (Kasper 2001:506) has manifested itself in a variety of ways. Some studies have shown that learners may have knowledge about certain grammatical forms, but do not use them (Salsbury & Bardovi-Harlig 2000, Kärkkäinen 1992). Other studies have shown that learners know certain grammatical forms and use them to achieve certain pragmalinguistic effects, but not according to convention in the target language. As Takahashi and Beebe stated, advanced learners “have the rope to hang themselves” (Takahashi & Beebe 1987 cited in Kasper 2001:507). The third type of results illustrate that some learners know a grammatical structure and its pragmalinguistic function, but still manage to use it inappropriately (Beebe & Takahashi 1989a, 1989b, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1991). Examples of studies which illustrate the reverse phenomenon are Eisenstein and Bodman’s studies from 1986 and 1993, where learners of English used strategies sociopragmatically correct, but the strategies were ungrammatical, such as *I very appreciate*, which also happens to be the title of their 1986 article. Another example from their study is an ‘unacceptable’ example of Aijmer’s category C, expressing appreciation of the addressee; *It is so glad to me that I have such kind of good friend* (in response to a friend agreeing to loan the speaker \$500).

In my view, a learner needs to have some grammatical knowledge in order to use the language in an appropriate sociopragmatic way. Being familiar with the grammar of a language does not necessarily mean that you have enough sociopragmatic knowledge to communicate successfully. A learner may know all possible strategies for expressing gratitude in a second language, but not when to use them, e.g. a non-native speaker of English may learn the expression *thank you* and may also use it appropriately in several situations, but will not have enough knowledge to understand why it is appropriate, and thus may have problems using it correctly in all situations. The students who participated in my study had received basic education in English in school and were now attending a university course in English grammar and thus would be expected to be familiar with certain routinised expressions of gratitude in English. Nonetheless, the results show that several had difficulties knowing in which situations they were to use these strategies and mainly relied on their L1 competence. This indicates that pragmatic competence is independent from grammatical competence.



Several models have been constructed to account for pragmatic development. Kasper and Rose summarise several of these models. The first model that was designed was Schumann's acculturation model. Schumann observed the language development of a 33-year-old Costa Rican man working in Massachusetts over a ten-month period and discovered that the man's interlanguage developed minimally. Schumann argued that the reason for this may have been that the social situation prevented the man's interlanguage from developing. His conclusion was that "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group [is] a major causal variable in SLA" (Schumann 1986 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:17).

Schmidt tested the acculturation model by observing a Japanese painter in Honolulu and his results were not consistent with the predictions of the acculturation model. Although the Japanese painter became more socialized, he achieved little progress when it came to grammatical competence. He made greater progress in communicative competence. Schmidt thus rejected Schumann's conclusion that the learning of grammatical features can be attributed to social distance factors and concluded that "the hypothesis that 'the degree of acculturation toward the 'model' language group seems to be the primary consideration in attempting to account for the varied levels of linguistic achievement reached by second language learners' is false" (Schmidt 1983 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:19). The acculturation model has not been adopted in any other studies of pragmatic development, but it provided valuable knowledge in the interlanguage pragmatic research and the assumption on which the model was based "that second language learning is crucially linked to the learner's social position in the target community and interaction with members of the target group is also recognised in other theories of SLA ..." (Kasper & Rose 2002:20).

Cognitive-psychological theory has also been used to account for pragmatic development in a second language. Two theories have been presented within the cognitive-psychological perspective on SLA; Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (Schmidt 1993 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:21) and Bialystok's two-dimensional model (Bialystok 1993, 1994 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:21). Schmidt's model is concerned with processing input. He distinguished noticing, "the conscious registration of the occurrence of some event", from understanding, "the recognition of some general

principle, rule or pattern” (Schmidt 1995 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:21) and argues that in order for a feature to be learnt the learner has to notice it first. Bialystock distinguishes children’s pragmatic learning from that of adults. His “model contends that children need to develop analytic representations of sociopragmatic knowledge” while adults mainly have to learn to process existing realisations (Kasper & Rose 2002:21-22). Hassal (1997 in Kasper 2001:511) points to the results from several studies which show that adult learners generally rely on their L1 competence or universal knowledge when producing utterances in a second language and argues that these results support Bialystock’s theory.

The final two theories Kasper and Rose discuss are connected to the social aspect of language. Traditional SLA research has dealt with the acquiring of morphology and/or grammar and has seen communication as a tool for acquiring such knowledge. In sociocultural theory communication is seen as field of competence in its own right. Conversation is not just a means of learning, it is learning or “cultural development” (Vygotsky 1981 cited in Kasper & Rose 2002:34). One of the most influential studies of SLA from the sociocultural theoretic perspective is that of Shea (1994). He investigated interaction between advanced speakers in a second language outside the classroom and found that “the quality of conversational participation can be seen as a critical locus for the development of second language proficiency ...” (Shea 1994 cited in Kasper 2001:516). Language socialisation, the final theory discussed in Kasper and Rose, sees language as a part of a socialisation process. “... children and other novices are socialized through language, part of such socialization being a socialization to use language meaningfully, appropriately and effectively” (Ochs 1996 in Kasper & Rose 2002:42). Socialisation is often implicit and is learnt through participating in conversation. None of these theories will be dealt with in particular in my study. I have included a short presentation of them because it is interesting to see how learners acquire features in another language. Some of the respondents who partook in my study had lived abroad in an English-speaking country and thus may have been influenced by or socialised into another language culture which again may have influenced their responses.

One of the methods used to determine the degree of proficiency in a second language, whether pragmatical or grammatical, is error analysis. In error analysis, non-

native production of language is compared to native, 'correct' production of language to identify potential errors (Ellis 1997:16). The errors may be universal or they may be typical of speakers sharing the same mother tongue. Ellis (1997:19) exemplifies universal errors by stating that "... most, if not all learners go through a stage of learning where they substitute the simple form of the verb for the past tense form". It is important to distinguish between error and mistake. Mistakes are simply pragmatic 'slips of the tongue', while errors indicate failure and a lack of having understood the underlying principle or rule. The potential errors may have different sources. Sometimes learners refrain from using a certain grammatical form, omission, while other times learners overuse a grammatical structure. Other typical sources are overgeneralisation, where learners apply for instance a grammatical rule to cases where the rule normally does not apply and transfer errors, where learners ascribe rules and practices from their mother tongue onto the second language (Ellis 1997:19). The error analysis method is useful in connection with how we go about teaching a second language successfully.

Transfer, in the narrow sense of the word, i.e. the transfer of processes from one language to another, is one type of error which can be determined by using error analysis. Today, research on transfer, in the broad sense of the word, is an important part of SLA research. However, transfer studies originated before SLA research as we know it today (Bou Franch 1998:2). In the early days of transfer research, there were generally two accepted beliefs, firstly, that native language strongly influenced the second language and secondly, that this influence was negative. However, in the 1970s, a new perspective on transfer arose. Now, researchers saw transfer as one of several processes influencing second language acquisition and the role of first language influence was seen as less influential. Traditionally, transfer was closely linked to theories of language learning and was used in the narrow sense. In more recent years, the notion of transfer has been widened to include positive and negative transfer, interference, avoidance, borrowing, aspects of language loss related to the acquisition of a second language, loss of elements and practices in the first language and incorporation of second language features into the first language (Bou Franch 1998:3).

This paper does not seek to deal with all these different aspects of transfer. I have mainly concentrated on the transfer of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic practices

from the first to the second language. Pragmalinguistic transfer can be defined as “the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influences learners’ perception and production of form-function mappings in L2” (Kasper 1992 cited in Bou Franch 1998:8). Sociopragmatic transfer can be defined as “when the social perceptions underlying language users’ interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts” (Kasper 1992 cited in Bou Franch 1998:9). In addition to determine what type of transfer that occurs in Norwegian EFL learners’ expressions of gratitude in English, I also aim to illustrate under which circumstances the transfer takes place. Both native and non-native speakers vary their strategies according to the context; however, second language learners often vary their strategies in the second language according to their sociolinguistic pattern of their first language (Bou Franch 1998:5). Speakers may judge the social constraints, such as power, social distance and size of imposition, differently in one culture than in another and if their judgments are carried over into their second language, this may cause misunderstandings.

There are different reasons as to why transfer occurs. One common reason is that learners assume that the sociopragmatic rules or principles relevant to their language are universal and thus can be used in a second language as well. Secondly, limited linguistic proficiency or limited knowledge about the culture in which the second language is spoken may cause the learner to rely on his/her first language competence and thus promote transfer. Thirdly, Bou Franch argues that the length of stay in the second language community is related to positive, but also negative transfer. Eisenstein and Bodman found that cultural knowledge is a more influential constraint than that of linguistic proficiency when it comes to pragmatic transfer (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986 & 1993). Bou Franch (1998:6) emphasises that these constraints on pragmatic transfer and how they operate need to be investigated further.

Several studies have been conducted to determine how global the phenomena of transfer and pragmatic failure within SLA and interlanguage pragmatics actually are. However, several questions remain unanswered. Researchers within the fields of interlanguage pragmatics and SLA have tried to verify the relationship between pragmatic errors and the native/target language and tried to explain the underlying

process(es) as well as the communicative effect. A third subject of research has been to determine in what aspects non-native speakers deviate from the native norm and whether or not this is affected by their native language, linguistic proficiency or ‘interlanguage’ as such (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:26). Yu’s 2004 study investigated compliment responses of two groups of Chinese learners of English, one living in the US and one in Taiwan. This study showed that “although there were substantial differences in the 2 learner groups, the performance of both reflected native language (L1) communicative styles and transfer of L1 sociocultural strategies in their second language behavior” (Yu 2004:102). In their 1986 study of gratitude expressions made by EFLs from five different countries, Eisenstein and Bodman found severe limitations at the sociopragmatic level as well as the pragmalinguistic level. Eisenstein and Bodman did not investigate whether these limitations were due to transfer from the L1 of the participants, but they reported that the reasons for this may have been that the participants might not have been familiar with situations as those presented in the DCT (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986:173) and thus perhaps relied on their experiences from their native language or chose to opt out. These studies show that both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer frequently occurs among L2 learners, thus there is reason to believe that this might be the case also for Norwegian learners, therefore, I want to test this. By testing this, I also hope to contribute to the field of SLA and transfer with regards to the Norwegian learners, an area in which little research has been done. Thus this might contribute to increase the existing knowledge in this field.

In the preceding sections, I have attempted to illustrate some of the theoretical background for my study, by mentioning central ideas within pragmatics, politeness and second language research. The discussion of each of these topics could be more extensive, however, the limited scope of this study does not allow for a more thorough discussion.

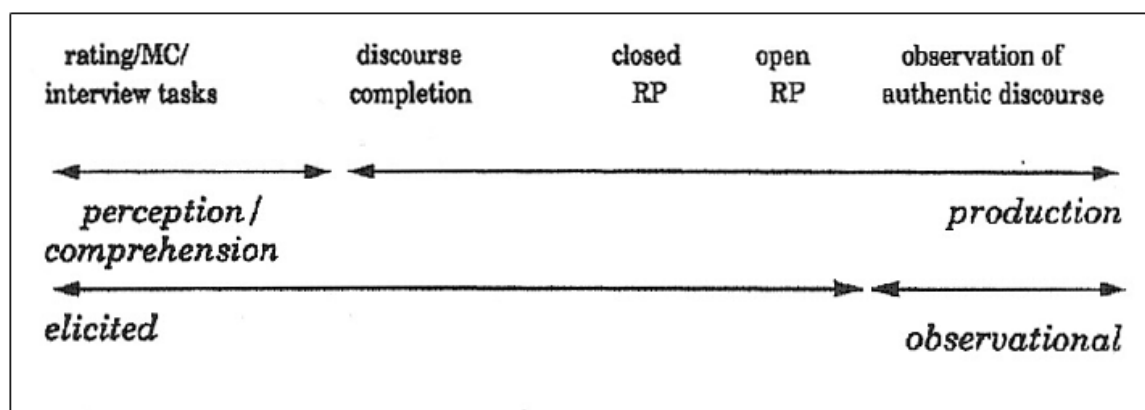
### 3 Method

In the following chapter, I will present and discuss my choice of method and give a presentation of how the survey was conducted, involving some information about the construction of the questionnaire and the participants who were involved.

#### 3.1 Choice of method

When studying speech acts or language in general, there are several ways to go about collecting the necessary data. One can use participants, electronic corpora or other collections of spoken or written text. In their article from 1991, Kasper and Dahl include a schematic illustration of different data collection methods relating to modality of language use and degree of control (Kasper & Dahl 1991:217). All methods illustrated below involve the use of participants, i.e. corpora are not included in the overview.

Figure 4 Overview of data collection methods



Note: MC = multiple choice questionnaire  
RP = role play

In this study, I have chosen to collect my data by using a discourse completion test, DCT, originally, constructed and used by Eisenstein and Bodman in their articles from 1986 and 1993. My choice to use this DCT was influenced by a variety of factors. First of all, as Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) point out, it is favourable that the situations in the DCT are based on natural occurring talk, as they are in Eisenstein and Bodman's DCT. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig compared naturally occurring rejections to rejections from an open-ended DCT (1992, cited in Rose & Ono 1995:196). They found that the responses differed primarily when it came to frequency of rejection strategies between the methods used. However, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig concluded that DCTs

are a very useful tool in the study of speech acts, but that natural language use should be used as a basis for the DCT (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992, cited in Rose & Ono 1995:196). Secondly, in addition to using a DCT which has been carefully constructed and thoroughly tested, I am able to compare my results to those of Eisenstein and Bodman and use their studies as a foundation for my study. A third advantage of using a DCT is that I avoid one of the problems characteristic of contrastive studies. As Johansson (2007:3) points out, one of the problems in contrastive studies is to know what to compare. "It is not sufficient to contrast formal categories. What is expressed in one language ... could be expressed in other languages in quite different ways" (Johansson 2007:3). In a DCT, the respondents have the opportunity to respond in whichever way they like, i.e. they are not asked to produce a certain speech act, but to state what they would say in a certain situation.

However, although frequently used and advantageous in many areas, the use of DCTs in the collection of speech act data, along with other elicitation methods, has also been criticised and a subject for debate. In the following paragraphs, I will present some of the arguments for and against using DCTs presented in the debate to illustrate some of the precautions one needs to consider when using this data elicitation method.

In the study of speech acts, the general goal has been to study real language production, but it has proved to be difficult to gather so-called 'natural language'. Researchers have generally preferred to use role plays, discourse completion tests or interviews to collect their data. However, all methods have been discussed and criticized, many of them because they may not represent 'natural' language production or because the language elicited is not 'natural' enough. Labov (1972 cited in Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:13) refers to this as the Observer's Paradox: "Our goal is then to observe the way that people use language when they are not being observed". Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper argue that since 'natural' data in this sense is impossible to achieve, we might settle for 'authentic' data and stereotypic aspects of speech behaviour (1989:13). Beebe and Cummings (1996:67) point out that written questionnaire data have been widely discussed while ethnographic data have not. They argue that the use of ethnographic data has its weaknesses as well. "Ethnographic data may be natural, and natural may be good in that they represent spontaneous natural speech as it really is. But ethnographic data and

notebook data are often unsystematic” (Beebe & Cummings 1996:67). They go on to point out some of the difficulties of ethnographic data, namely that the social characteristics of the informants are often unknown; there are often different numbers of informants in each social category; and ethnographic data are often unsystematically collected. Thus, to ensure that the situational factors are similar for all participants is difficult. Similarly, it is difficult to control the factors which may influence the participants’ utterances and consequently, it is problematic to suggest explanations as to why the participants express themselves the way they do.

The perhaps most frequent method used to elicit speech is to use a questionnaire of some sort, oral or written. A questionnaire generally consists of a list of questions which the participants read, interpret and give answers to. In questionnaires, the respondents record the answers themselves, as opposed to in an interview where the interviewer records the answers (Kumar 2005:126). This may be both favourable and unfavourable. It is favourable because it disfavours interviewer bias, but it may be unfavourable because the answer to one of the questions may be influenced by the other questions, presupposed that the participant has read the other questions in the questionnaire before answering. There are several variants of questionnaires used to collect material in language research, e.g. multiple choice questionnaires, rating questionnaires, and different versions of elicitation tests. One of the most common questionnaire types used to elicit speech acts has been the discourse completion test. DCTs usually consist of “scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations. Each dialogue is preceded by a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, and the social distance between the participants and their status relative to each other ...” (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:13). In some DCTs, the situations are followed by an incomplete dialogue designed to extract a certain speech act. Other DCTs are constructed in the way that the participant may choose to opt out and not say anything.

One of the arguments in the debate regarding the advantages of using a DCT is that it is easy to distribute if you are gathering data from different geographical areas and have limited resources (Kumar 2005:127, 130). However, by letting the participants respond in writing and perhaps even send it by mail or email, the participants will have



more time to complete the questionnaire which would not have been the case in oral communication (Cohen 1996:26). When comparing the production of speech acts or other aspects in communication, the goal is often to illustrate practices that reflect natural language use. In a communication situation, the interlocutors do not have an extensive amount of time to plan their next utterance, which is more likely to be the case when asked to produce utterances in a written form, e.g. in a questionnaire. Thus the responses given in a questionnaire may not represent literally what the respondent would have said in a communication situation.

Comparing DCTs to interviews, there are some advantages to using a DCT, especially if the participants involved are learners of a second language and perhaps uncertain about their own competence level. The DCTs offer participants greater anonymity and the participants would not become as anxious as might have been the case in an oral interview (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:169). Bondi Johannessen suggests another advantage in using questionnaires. She states that by using a questionnaire it is more difficult to influence the respondents and thus compromise the results (Bondi Johannessen 2003:137). However, she goes on to point out that by using a questionnaire the researcher loses the opportunity to ask the participant to explain his/her answer, etc. By eliciting oral information in a written form rather than orally, i.e. that the participant is asked to write down his/her response, rather than stating it aloud, certain information is lost which may have been relevant in the interpretation of the respondent's answer. Cohen (1996:25) emphasises that aspects of language such as prosody and non-verbal features are not collected in this way. In a DCT information such as turn-taking and cooperation between the participants to produce successful speech acts is also lost.

Thus, by using a DCT in my study, certain information in the process of thanking is lost and I am not able to study non-verbal behaviour in connection with thanking, which is also an important aspect of communication. Showing the person responsible for the act prior to the expression of gratitude that you are pleased with the act he/she has performed is also one way of expressing appreciation, i.e. gratitude. However, as Eisenstein and Bodman note, using a DCT may also be favourable when studying second language learners. In my study, I ensured the participants that they were anonymous and that they did not have to worry about spelling mistakes or any other mistakes. By doing

that, I think the participants felt comfortable and consequently put less restrictions on themselves and their responses.

One of the most crucial criticisms towards using DCTs has been that the elicited responses differ from those produced in ordinary oral communication. To test if there were any differences between data elicited by DCTs and natural talk, Beebe and Cummings compared DCT refusals to refusals in telephone conversations. Their results showed that DCTs disfavour long sequences of speech and that the responses on the DCTs were different from those in the telephone conversations on five points; avoidance by hedging, request for empathy, expression of empathy, expression of positive feeling; and criticism (Beebe & Cummings 1996). They argue that DCTs may be a valuable tool in gathering large amount of data quickly, creating an initial classification of strategies which are likely to occur in natural speech, studying stereotypical requirements for socially appropriate responses and gaining insight into social and psychological factors which may influence the production of speech acts and determining the form of speech acts in the minds of speakers. However, they argue that DCTs do not reflect actual wordings used in real interaction, leave out certain formulas and strategies such as avoidance, do not reflect the degree of emotion that affects the tone, content and linguistic form of the utterance and do not reflect the number of repetitions or elaborations (Beebe & Cummings 1996:80). Cohen and Olshtain point out a similar argument: “As for discourse completion, it is a projective measure of speaking and so the cognitive processes involved in producing utterances in response to this elicitation device may not truly reflect those used when having to speak naturally” (Cohen & Olshtain 1995:148).

The criticism made by Beebe and Cummings and Cohen and Olshtain is crucial to the validity of studies involving DCTs as a way of collecting material. In my opinion, as is also suggested by Rose and Ono (1995), results which are based on data collected by using a DCT can not simply be disregarded, because, as have been illustrated by other studies e.g. Billmyer and Varghese (2000), the strategies elicited by DCTs have been showed to be the same as in natural conversation, but that the number of false starts, hedging, etc. tend to be more numerous in natural speech than in speech elicited in a written form by using a DCT. Thus, I agree with Billmyer and Varghese’s (2000:517)

argument that a better understanding of communication in such constructed contexts as in a DCT may help us understand authentic communication better.

Golato (2003) also summarises some of the disadvantages of using DCTs. He states that DCTs are metapragmatic “in that they explicitly require participants not to conversationally interact, but to articulate what they believe would be situationally appropriate responses within possible, yet imaginary, interactional settings” (Golato 2003:92). Although part of his argument is valid in that in a DCT the participants are not asked to interact, I disagree with this description of the responses given by participants in DCTs. In Eisenstein and Bodman’s DCT, the participants were instructed to write down exactly what *they* would say in the situations described, not what they thought was appropriate. When distributing the modified version of Eisenstein and Bodman’s DCT, I emphasised this point as well. I specifically stated that I wanted the participants to write down what they would have said and that there were no ‘wrong answers’.

Another point worth mentioning in connection to Golato’s criticism of DCTs is that pointed out by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989:13). They cite Hill et. al (1986) and indicate that “using written elicitation techniques enables us to obtain more stereotyped responses; that is ‘the prototype of the variants occurring in the individual’s actual speech’”. Beebe and Cummings also suggest that the responses given on a DCT are similar to those used in natural communication. “the similarities between natural spoken refusals and written questionnaire refusals are quite strong – strong enough to suggest that Discourse Completion Tests are a good way to discover what semantic formulas are frequently used (or expected) in performance of a speech act” (Beebe & Cummings 1996:73).

In order for DCTs and multiple choice questionnaires to be used in speech act studies Rose and Ono (1995) suggest some problems that need to be addressed. Rose and Ono (1995:191) performed a study of requests in Japanese to address the validity of DCTs and multiple choice questionnaires. Their results indicated some problems with DCTs in speech act studies, which they argued needed to be addressed if they were to be used in such studies. The first methodological point that needs to be focused on is “the effect of participants’ lack of experience with a given situation (or situations) on the resulting data ...” (Rose & Ono 1995:193). In their 1993 article, Eisenstein and Bodman

found out after post hoc interviews with the non-native participants that they were not familiar with some of the situations in the questionnaire and thus did not know how to respond. Rose and Ono argue that this may have an effect on the results and thus needs to be considered when administering a DCT.

To reduce the risk of participants experiencing unfamiliarity with the situations or cultural disorientation in my study, I performed a pilot study using the questionnaire I intended to use in the actual study and allowed for the participants to comment on the questionnaire and the naturalness of the situations in the questionnaire. Kasper and Dahl argue that such “metapragmatic assessments of contextual factors can provide an important corrective, or confirmation, of the values and weights of contextual factors built into the instrument by the researcher” (1991:239). The results of the pilot study will be discussed below. The second issue that needs to be addressed is that of comparability of written DCT data and spoken data. On this point Rose and Ono conclude that a much larger scale study than their own need to be conducted in order to discard any of the questionnaire types they used. “We are not claiming that one source of data is *better* than any other; we know too little to make such claims and, frankly, we are sceptical of their value. It would be more productive to ask *better for what purpose?*” (Rose & Ono 1995:207, their emphasis). Their overall conclusion is that previous research using questionnaires is not to be discarded or considered to be invalid, but that results need to be treated carefully until more research is done on how elicitation methods effect data collection (Rose and Ono 1995:208).

Since Rose and Ono’s study, there have been new attempts to find out how elicitation methods influence the production of speech act data. In their 2000 article, Billmyer and Varghese investigate to which degree more explicitly stated prompts would affect the production of requests by non-native speakers and native speakers of English. They used the original DCT used in the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989) and made a second version with a more detailed description of the situations. Based on their results, they argue that the few social variables often included in DCTs are not powerful enough to elicit responses similar to those which would occur in natural data (Billmyer & Varghese 2000:543). I agree with the points Billmyer and Varghese suggest, i.e. that for a DCT to be as nature-like as possible, the description of the situation

must contain certain information, e.g. time of day, location, etc. However, their results also show that the core strategies used in both versions of the DCTs were the same, despite the varying length of the responses (Billmyer & Varghese 2000:542). In addition, there are some complications by using long and detailed prompts. First of all, the non-native speakers used considerably longer time to complete the questionnaire. Secondly, some of the participants borrowed words in their responses from the prompts (Billmyer & Varghese 2000:541), thus the descriptions of the situations failed to stimulate the participants to produce utterances they felt natural, but rather put words into their mouths. Thus, results arrived at by using ‘traditional’ DCTs should, in my opinion, not be disregarded. Furthermore, the DCT I am using in this study, although not as extensive as Billmyer and Varghese’s version, has other advantages. It allows for comparison with Eisenstein and Bodman’s results and include over twice as many descriptions of situations as that of Billmyer and Varghese.

Although there has been a lot of criticism questioning the validity of DCTs, some scholars have also argued in favour of using this data collection method. Rintell and Mitchell compared requests and apologies elicited from open-ended DCTs with requests and apologies from role plays. They found that the speech acts elicited from role plays were generally longer and less direct than the responses given in the DCT (Rintell & Mitchell 1989, cited in Rose & Ono 1995:195). However, they concluded that “language elicited in this study is very similar whether collected in written or oral form ... both methods elicit representations of spoken language” (Rintell & Mitchell 1989 cited in Rose & Ono 1995:195). Their study did not assess the question as to how well the data represented natural language use (Rose & Ono 1995:196). This question, however, was assessed in Beebe and Cumming’s study of refusals in telephone conversations and DCTs. They concluded that “... the similarities between natural spoken refusals and written questionnaire refusals are quite strong – strong enough to suggest that Discourse Completion Tests are a good way to discover what semantic formulas are frequently used (or expected) in performance of a speech act” (Beebe & Cummings 1996:73).

DCTs allow for different types of research as well, i.e. qualitative, quantitative, deductive, heuristic, etc. My research objective is to discover how students who are native speakers of Norwegian express gratitude in certain typical situations, compared to

how they express gratitude in English in the same situations and thus discover such 'semantic formulas' referred to by Beebe and Cummings above. To answer these questions, the overall method I have adopted is of a qualitative nature. As presented in the introduction, I aim to describe and account for the nature of these gratitude expressions and thus a qualitative research method is best suited. The purpose of qualitative research in social sciences is to seek "answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings ... how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth" (Berg 2004:7). Using a DCT allows for me to investigate speech act production in a variety of settings and thus perhaps illustrate some general strategies used when expressing gratitude in Norwegian. However, I must emphasise that my results are not statistically tested and thus my comments regarding differences need to be further tested to secure their value.

Compared to quantitative research, qualitative research may seem a bit chaotic to apply to actual material. This is, however, not the case. Qualitative research, as quantitative research, aims to provide answers to questions "through the application of systemic procedures" (Berg 2004:7). These systematic procedures are identified according to the field of research in question. Quantitative research deals mainly with numbers and statistic representations of research material and is by many considered as the 'proper' form of research. The quantitative researcher Kerlinger argued that "there is no such thing as qualitative data. Everything is either 1 or 0" (Kerlinger in Miles & Huberman cited in Berg 2004:3). Responding to criticism, such as that of Kerlinger, Campell stated that "all research ultimately has a qualitative grounding" (Campell cited in Miles & Huberman cited in Berg 2004:3) in that there is a reason for how people behave and how they speak that is equally important to document as the frequency of a certain behaviour or a certain way of speaking. A reasonable conclusion to this hotly debated subject is that qualitative and quantitative research, each in their own way, introduces valuable knowledge in studying different topics, such as speech acts. A quantitative study could for instance illustrate the frequency of a certain strategy, while a qualitative study could describe how speakers combine certain strategies etc.

Researchers have argued that quantitative and qualitative research is not that distinct. (See Dabbs 1982.) However, it might be useful to illustrate the aspects in which these two methods are different. "... quantity is elementally an amount of something ... quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things" (Berg 2004:2-3). "Quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience. Qualitative research, thus, refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg 2004:2-3). Qualitative research gives access to 'unquantifiable' information and allows for the researcher to explore how people understand and structure their surroundings. In natural sciences there are certain things that occur at such a regular basis that they are deemed universal laws (Berg 2004:15). There are no such incidents in the social sciences. However, this does not mean that social life operates chaotically. Social life operates within fairly regular patterns, as discussed earlier, some also claim that there are aspects of the way we speak which are subdued certain universal rules, and qualitative research aims to make sense of these patterns (Berg 2004:15).

In their articles from 1986 and in 1993, Eisenstein and Bodman performed a qualitative study to find out how native speakers of American English expressed gratitude and whether learners of English, who were living in the US and had lived there for some time, were able to produce native-like gratitude expressions. Eisenstein and Bodman developed a discourse completion test meant to elicit ritualistic gratitude expressions. They observed naturally occurring situations in which conventional expressions such as 'thank you', 'appreciate' and so on occurred with the illocutionary force of expressing gratitude, and based on those situations they identified fifty situations. Eisenstein and Bodman noted that several of the variables present in natural conversation could complicate the analysis of the situations and restricted the situations to twenty-five in order to limit the variables (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:169). The twenty-five situations underwent severe testing and the version of the questionnaire used in the study consisted of fourteen carefully constructed situations in which the participant's role, the relationship with the interlocutor, the setting and the events developing the situation were cautiously described (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:169). "Following the advice of Wolfson (personal communication), we took care to describe the roles and the

relationships of the interlocutors, along with the setting and the events, in developing the situations described on the questionnaire” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:169). The questionnaire was administered to sixty-seven non-native speakers of English of fifteen language backgrounds residing and studying in the US. The results were compared to the responses from fifty-six native speakers of English (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:170).

In their 1993 article, Eisenstein and Bodman extended their research material by first rating the responses from the discourse completion test/task and interviewing some of the non-native speakers who participated. They also administered their questionnaire orally, taping the participants’ responses. Finally, they used the situations as basis for role plays.

To collect material for my study of gratitude expressions in Norwegian and English I have used a slightly revised version of Eisenstein and Bodman’s questionnaire, which will be described below. By using a DCT, I am able to control certain influencing factors and thus make sure that the situations in which the participants perform an utterance are similar. This makes it easier to compare the varieties of the speech act in question. Furthermore, there are several administrative advantages by using this method. Golato emphasises some of these administrative advantages, e.g. that it is easier for the researcher to control variables such as age of the respondents and features of the situation etc. (Golato 2003:92).

### ***3.2 Design and distribution of the questionnaire***

The first step in the planning process of the study was to go through all fourteen situations to see whether there were any situations which would be untypical of Norwegian daily life. It is crucial for the validity of the results that the wording and the content of the situations are as natural as possible for the participants. After careful consideration (and discussion with my supervisor), I chose to exclude the ‘supermarket’ situation and the ‘parking’ situation from the original DCT in the Norwegian translation. These situations were, however, included in the English version of the DCT, based on the fact that if these situations are characteristic of American daily life, learners of English should be able to know what to say in those situations. Furthermore, the English situations which were included on the DCTs distributed to the native speakers of



Norwegian contained a sentence in which they were asked to imagine that they were living in an English-speaking environment abroad. Another problem when translating the DCT appeared in the situations involving money. I had to convert the figures given in the situations into the appropriate currency and more challenging try to adjust them according to today's standards. (Incidentally, the DCT was originally constructed in the 1980s and the economy has changed since then.) Situation number 7 in the original DCT, for instance, is designed to be a situation where the size of imposition is great. This had to be the case in the Norwegian translation as well, or else the results may not have been comparable. As discussed earlier, a situational factor such as size of imposition may affect the way the speaker expresses him/herself.

After translating and adjusting the questionnaire, I formed two sets of DCTs each consisting of thirteen situations half of them in Norwegian and the other half in English. The first set had six translated situations first and the remaining seven in English, whereas the other set had seven English situations and six Norwegian ones. Thus all participants got the opportunity to express themselves both in Norwegian and English and did not have the opportunity to provide a response to the same situation in both Norwegian and English, which, as I have discussed earlier, may have led to biased responses. The questionnaire was distributed to two groups each consisting of seventeen native speakers of Norwegian. One group got half of the situations in Norwegian and the other half in English, and the other group got the situations the other way around. The situations were distributed in this way to avoid the participants responding to the same situation in both languages. This could have lead to participants simply translating their responses and giving identical answers in Norwegian and English. Thus the results of the study would have been compromised. One could argue that all students should have got all situations in both languages, because then we would have known what each individual participant would have said in every situation in both Norwegian and English. However, since there was a risk of having identical answers, I chose to split the questionnaire.

The DCTs were then distributed to a small group of native speakers of Norwegian, three boys and three girls, in approximately the same age group as the main participants and with some university or college education; however, none of them in English language or linguistics. They completed the DCTs and afterwards they were

asked to comment on the format and the naturalness of the situations. Their responses were considered and the DCTs were adjusted accordingly. The aim and goal of this pilot study was to see whether the situations created by Eisenstein and Bodman could be applied to speakers of Norwegian who were a part of a 'Norwegian culture'. Eisenstein and Bodman report that some of the participants from other cultures felt some of the situations to be rather odd or difficult to imagine (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:69). The participants in the pilot study which I conducted stated that they felt they could imagine themselves being in the situations described. However, they pointed out some minor adjustments, e.g. information about whether the participants were supposed to answer in Norwegian or English needed to be clearer; some pointed out that there was a gap between 'daglig' (daily) and 'av og til' (now and then) in the characterisation of how the participants hear, write, speak and read English, i.e. 'daglig' was too often and 'av og til' was too seldom thus, the participants wanted an intermediate alternative describing the frequency more accurately. Consequently, I included 'ofte' (often) as an alternative. Finally, there were two spelling mistakes in the translation, which were corrected immediately.

After analysing the results of the pilot study and adjusting it accordingly, the final versions of the DCT were handed out to the Norwegian students who were to participate in the study. They were given the questionnaire in the classroom, and they were instructed to write down exactly what they would say if they were in the situations described. I emphasised that grammatical errors and spelling mistakes were absolutely irrelevant and that there were no right or wrong answers. I stated that I merely was interested in what they would say in certain situations and that if they would not have said anything, they should just leave the space open. To avoid any researcher bias, I did not, however, say anything about the fact that the situations were meant to extract gratitude expressions nor did I say anything about the intention of DCT or the thesis in general. I chose not to say anything about gratitude expressions or what I wanted to find out to avoid the participants feeling obliged to utter expressions of gratitude rather than what they was natural. The versions of the DCTs were handed out to the Norwegian participants at the beginning of a seminar in English grammar and the participants were asked to complete the DCT and hand it in immediately afterwards. It was emphasised that

the questionnaire was not a part of the grammar course, but a questionnaire connected to a master thesis in English language. In addition to the Norwegian students, the questionnaire was distributed to a control group of native speakers of British English connected to the University of York. An English version of the questionnaire was distributed via email to the students and the students were also asked to distribute the questionnaire further to their friends. Accompanying the questionnaire was a letter including similar instructions as the ones I had given the Norwegian participants. The British students had different educational backgrounds as well as geographical and social backgrounds. The majority of the British participants were in the same age group as the Norwegian students.

The questionnaires in my study came in two versions, as I explained above. It also consisted of two parts. The second part was the actual DCT, i.e. the situations, while the first part was constructed to elicit some personal information that could have an influence on the participants' answers and simultaneously, secure the homogeneity of the group of the participants. Studies have shown that certain factors may have an effect on the way speakers express themselves. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper state that different factors may affect the way we speak. "The relative importance played by these and other situational factors may differ from culture to culture. Variance in the directness of requesting behavior in Israeli society (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985) has been found to be affected by personal variables ..." (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:4). Similarly, Nilsson and Waldemarson argue that gender, level of education, etc. influence the way we speak, think and interpret the world. "Kön, utbildning, vanor och umgänge gör att man ser på världen och på människor på lite olika sätt. Man talar olika, tänker olika, tolkar samma händelser på olika sätt" (Nilsson & Waldemarson 1990:75). Thus these factors may be useful and interesting to consider in connection with the participants' ability to respond in an appropriate sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic way. Although it would have been interesting to study the way age, gender, etc. affect the way the participants expressed gratitude, this is unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study.

Included in the questions about educational background in the Norwegian version of the questionnaire was a question about length of stay in an English-speaking country. I wanted to establish whether any of the participants had lived or studied in an English-

speaking country or environment and how often the participants believe they use English outside their studies. English is frequently used in Norwegian media channels, i.e. television, the Internet, magazines, advertisements, etc. and is a part of many youth cultures and thus a common part of the daily life of most Norwegians. Preisler performed a comprehensive and very informative study of Danes and the influence of English in Denmark. As far as I know, a similar study has not been performed in Norway, but the results Preisler found for Denmark may also give an indication of what we can expect in Norway if a similar survey was conducted here.

Fremmedsproget engelsk har en særstatus i Danmark og andre lande i og uden for Vesteuropa. Det er ikke blot – i kraft af sin udbredelse i verden og status som internationalt kommunikationssprog – det vigtigste fremmedsprog i skolen og et vigtigt element i mange internationalt orienterede uddannelser. Det engelske sprog ledsager den meget kraftige kulturelle påvirkning af det danske samfund, med rod i de engelsksprogede lande, som slår igennem overalt i dagligdagen, i medierne, i alle samfundslag og i alle erhverv. (Preisler 1999:11)

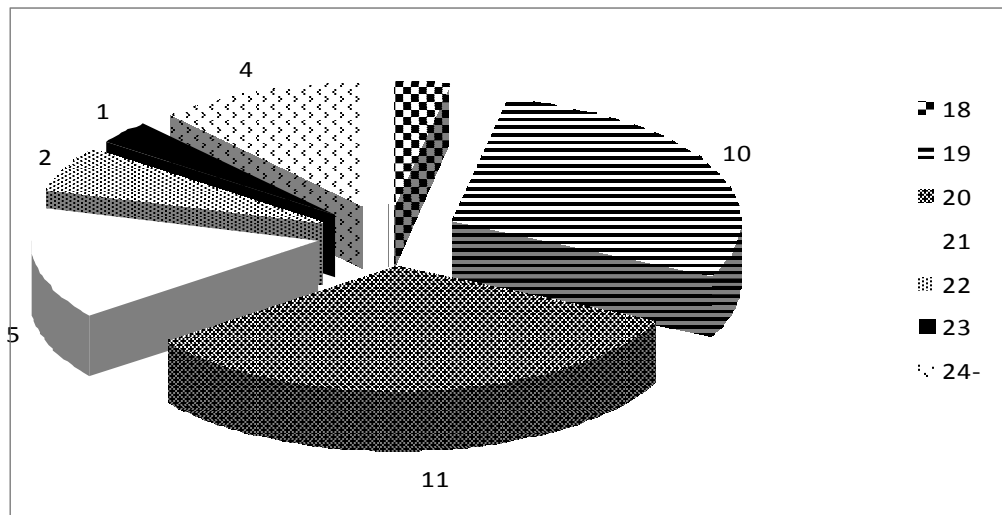
Preisler states that American and British culture enjoys approximately the same degree of popularity among Danes. However, the orientation towards Great Britain rose according to the participants' age and education. Orientation towards the US was typical of young people and people with low education, while an orientation towards Great Britain was slightly more common among older people or people with long education (Preisler 1999: 229). The results of how the Norwegian participants would characterise their usage of English will be presented in the following chapter.

### ***3.3 Participants***

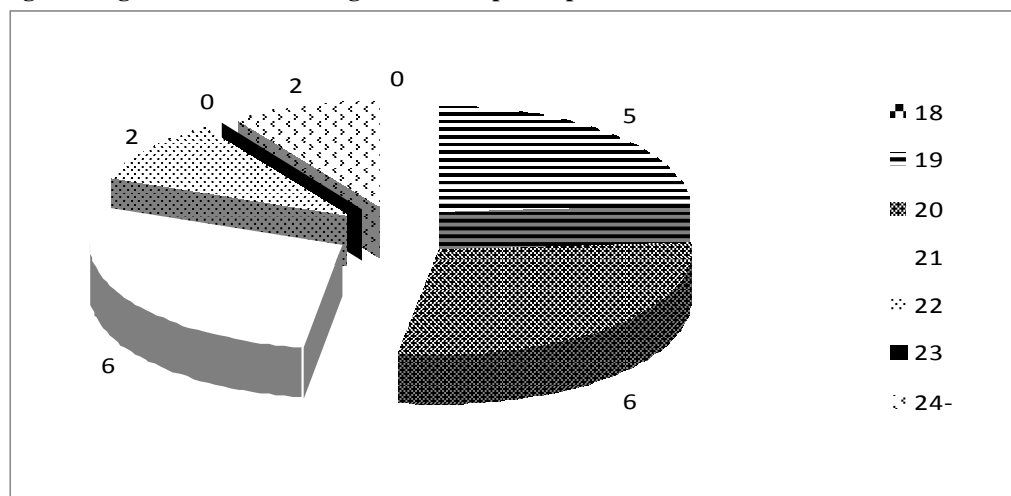
The DCT was handed out to two groups of Norwegian students and a control group of British students. In addition to my data, I refer to Eisenstein and Bodman's report of their findings when distributing the questionnaire to native speakers of American English (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986). Thus they can be seen as indirectly participating in my study as well. Their participants will be presented in more detail below. The group of British students were included in the study to determine whether perhaps the Norwegian students assimilated a more 'British way of expressing gratitude'. As Preisler observed, Danes who have received education at higher level, tend to orient themselves towards Britain, rather than the US. Furthermore, the full data set from the

investigation of native speakers' responses from Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 article is not available, other than only examples and summaries which are included in the appendix of the article (personal communication Eisenstein Ebsworth, 2008). Thus I collected my own material from groups as homogenous as possible. The groups of Norwegian students who participated in my study had different geographical backgrounds, but were now enrolled in an introductory grammar course at the University of Oslo. They were students of English as a foreign language, EFL, as opposed to students of English as a second language, ESL, and were approximately between 18 and 26 years old.

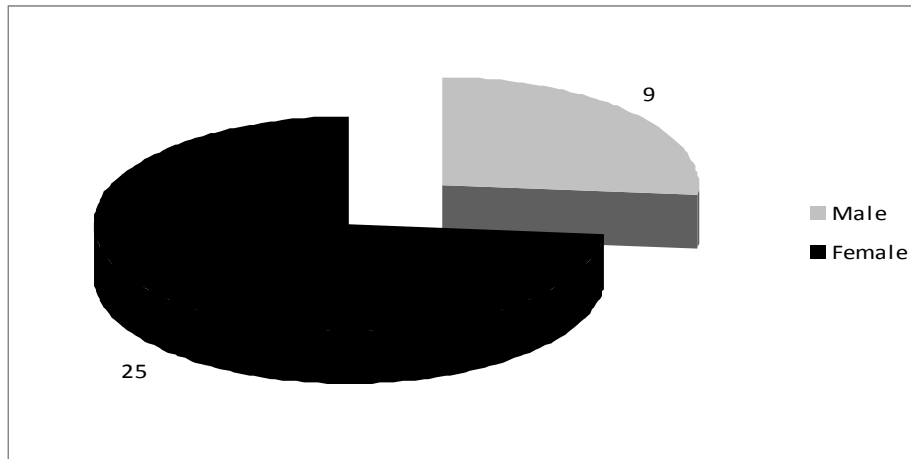
**Figure 5 Age distribution among the Norwegian participants**



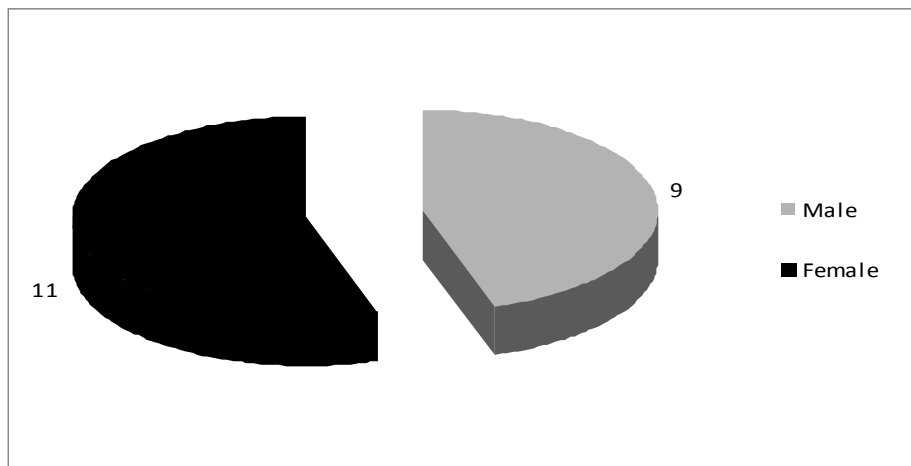
**Figure 6 Age distribution among the British participants**



**Figure 7 Gender distribution among the Norwegian participants**



**Figure 8 Gender distribution among the British participants**

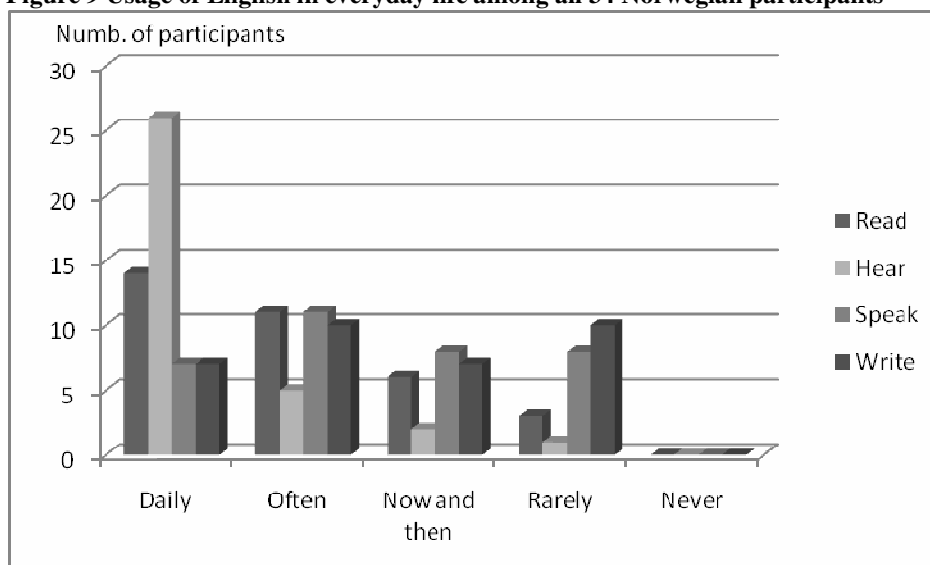


I also chose to include a question about the speakers' mother tongue, to see whether deviations in their language production could be explained by influence or transfer from another language background. However, all the Norwegian participants stated that Norwegian was their mother tongue and the British participants stated that English was their mother tongue, thus this question will not be discussed any further.

Questions about the educational background of the participants were also included in the English version of the questionnaire. However, here they were limited to two questions, one asking how many years the participants have studied at university level and which subjects. In addition to the questions about educational background in the

Norwegian version of the questionnaire, a set of questions regarding the participants' use of English in the daily life was included. The questions dealt with the participants' conception of how often they hear, speak, write and read English outside their studies. These questions were included to give a crude overview of the participants' use of English on an everyday basis, considering that this may influence their production of English. Furthermore, it is important to see whether the participants receive any type of input other than what they receive in a teaching situation. Input, i.e. "the samples of language to which a learner is exposed" (Ellis 1997:5), is a prerequisite for language learning. Ellis points out that a question of considerable interest is what type of input that learners benefit from. Whether input that has been simplified for learners or authentic communication facilitates learning (Ellis 1997:5). This question will not be dealt with in the present study.

**Figure 9 Usage of English in everyday life among all 34 Norwegian participants**



There is an overwhelming majority of the Norwegian participants who state that they hear English daily. This result coincides with Preisler's results in his investigation of Danes' perception of English in Denmark. "Hvis man spørger danskerne hvor ofte de hører det engelske sprog, så siger et overvældende flertal (80%) at de hører engelsk én til flere gange om dagen" (Preisler 1999:29). The results may not be very surprising, because the majority of television programs, films, etc. are broadcasted with English speech and Norwegian subtitles. The numbers of Norwegian participants' perception of how often

they read English outside their studies are more evenly distributed between the categories. Preisler argues that while Danes are generally conscious of how often they hear English, their perception of how often they read English is not consistent with their reactions when they are introduced to examples of written English which they are likely to run into (Preisler 1999:33). People may not be aware of how often they see written English. In Norway, English is commonly used in advertisements and user manuals, etc. As students of English, it is not unthinkable that the Norwegian participants would read English newspapers as well.

The numbers of participants' perceptions of how often they speak and write English outside their studies were more or less equally distributed among the participants. Preisler states that approximately half of the Danes who participated in the study stated that they speak, write and hear English on a regular basis. He goes on to explain that the majority of the Danes who use English regularly are young people or people with higher education (Preisler 1999:226). By looking at Figure 9 above, it is evident that the participants in my study also use English on a regular basis and thus receive input even outside their studies. This may be a reason to expect that they have had a chance to achieve some sociopragmatic competence. The participants were also asked to state whether they had lived and/or studied in an English-speaking country. As Bou Franch (1998) observed, length of stay in the L2 community may affect sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer.

**Table 1 Overview of the participants who had lived and/or studied abroad**

| Number of participants | English-speaking country | Length of stay |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1                      | US                       | 1 year         |
| 1                      | UK                       | ½ year         |
| 1                      | UK                       | 2 years        |
| 1                      | US                       | 4 years        |
| 1                      | US/UK                    | 2 years        |
| 1                      | UK                       | 1 year         |
| 1                      | Australia                | 1 year         |



The native speakers of American English who partook in Eisenstein and Bodman's studies ranged from twelve to eighty-two in age and came from the Northeastern, Southeastern, Southern, Midwestern and Western parts of the US. The non-native students who participated in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 study were ESL learners, and had lived in the US for different periods of time. Fifteen language backgrounds were represented in their studies, the largest of which were Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian and Spanish (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:170). The non-native speakers had been in the US for approximately two years on average. In their 1993 article, Eisenstein and Bodman summarised the results from their 1986 article and conducted two additional experiments, one which involved ten native speakers responding orally to the situations in the DCT and one which involved forty non-native pairs of speakers and twenty-four native speakers paired with non-natives performing role-plays based on the original questionnaire (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:70-71).

It needs to be considered that the participants in my study have a greater uniformity when it comes to age than those who participated in Eisenstein and Bodman's study of native speakers. However, despite the fact that the uniformity in age among my participants is not as generaliseable as the responses in Eisenstein and Bodman's study, the uniformity in age may be used to rule out certain influential factors, such as great differences in educational background and working experience, etc. As Gray points out when discussing the participants in his study: "den store uniformiteten i alder ... kan da brukes som kontrollparadigme for å utelukke forstyrrelsesfaktorer" (Gray 2005:73). The reason for choosing students in this particular age group and who were studying English at university level was because they were at the beginning of their academic career and were not familiar with pragmatics as an area within linguistics yet. Still, they were expected to have a relatively high competence in English, i.e. lexicon and starting to learn grammar at an advanced level.

### ***3.4 Analysing the data***

I have used terminology introduced by Brown and Levinson, originally introduced in 1978, (Brown & Levinson 1988) and adopted and further developed by Thomas (1995) to explicitly describe the power relationship, social distance and size of imposition in the

situations in the DCT. (See also Scollon and Scollon, 2001.) To illustrate the social factors in each situation, I have used the abbreviations –P or +P to illustrate whether the differences in power between the interlocutors is great + or small -. –D and +D illustrate the degree of social distance, while –S and +S illustrate whether the size of imposition is great + or small -. I have use these terms, including Thomas’ fourth dimension ‘rights and obligations’, +RO and –RO, in my description of the situations because it is helpful to have a clear view of the relationship and distance between the participants in communication and the size of imposition as these factors may influence language production. After collecting the material, the data were classified according to Aijmer’s thanking strategies. As I mentioned in chapter 2, all responses did not fit into Aijmer’s system, thus I had to use my own tentative terminology or terminology from Eisenstein and Bodman’s articles. The next step in my processing of the material was to determine whether the realisations used applied to the hearer’s positive or negative face to be able to see whether the different groups of participants attended more to different types of face, i.e. whether there was a difference in their choice of positive and negative politeness. As discussed in section 2.1.4, I attempted to fit Aijmer’s categories into Brown and Levinson’s categories of negative and positive politeness.

I have mainly relied on Aijmer’s distinction of gratitude expressions in my coding of the material due to the detailed presentation of the different categories and possible strategies presented in her chapter. I have, however, tried to cross-reference her categories with those of Eisenstein and Bodman for the sake of comparison, though Eisenstein and Bodman do not give an as detailed description of their categories. Furthermore, as the results will show, the responses given in several of the situations were not thanking expressions as such and thus difficult to place into Aijmer’s characterisation. In these difficult cases I have used suitable terminology, if found, from Eisenstein and Bodman’s articles or I have suggested some explanatory categories of my own. These new categories are intended to be regarded as a tool in the classification of the results and not necessarily as a suggestion of an expansion of Aijmer’s system. Aijmer includes the following categories (hence section 2.1.4).

**Table 2 Overview of Aijmer's categories**

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| <b>A</b> | <b>Thanking somebody explicitly</b>  | <b>e.g. thank you, thanks</b>                        |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Expressing gratitude</b>  | <b>e.g. I am grateful</b>                            |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Expressing appreciation of the addressee</b>  | <b>e.g. that's kind of you, that's nice (of you)</b> |
| <b>D</b> | <b>Expressing appreciation of the act</b>  | <b>e.g. that's lovely, it's appreciated</b>          |
| <b>E</b> | <b>Acknowledging a debt of gratitude</b>   | <b>e.g. I owe a debt of gratitude to ...</b>         |
| <b>F</b> | <b>Stressing one's gratitude</b>   | <b>e.g. I must thank you</b>                         |
| <b>G</b> | <b>Expressing emotion</b>  | <b>e.g. Oh (thank you)</b>                           |
| <b>H</b> | <b>Commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's own importance (self-denigration)</b> | <b>e.g. I am an ingrate, I am so careless</b>        |

Eisenstein and Bodman have coded their material based on functional categories described in van Ek (1976) and Searle (1969). However, to classify some of the responses they came across, they had to come up with their own tentative terminology (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:66).

Some of the responses that did not fit into Aijmer's strategy categories could easily be explained by the fact that the participant was not performing a variant of the speech act of thanking, but another speech act, such as for instance the speech act of greeting, e.g. *Bye, Have a nice day*, etc. Others, however, had the illocutionary force of expressing gratitude, but did not fit into the classification. A very common response from the Norwegian participants both in English and in Norwegian was an expression indicating a form of debt. Here are some examples from the situation where the participant is taken to lunch at a nice restaurant by a friend and the friend pays for him/her:

**3-1** *Next time it's on me*

**3-2** *Hey, thanks man! We have to do this again, and remember, next time it's my treat!*

**3-3** *Hadde jeg visst vi skulle på en så eksklusiv restaurant hadde jeg ikke latt deg spandere. Neste gang er det jeg som spanderer. Tusen takk for den gode maten.*

One could argue that these expressions would belong to Aijmer's category E 'acknowledging a debt of gratitude', but in my opinion it is not a debt of gratitude that is being acknowledged, but rather the speaker is promising to repay the other person. I have simply classified utterances such as these as 'expressing debt/indebtedness'.

Another frequent set of responses was responses expressing lack of obligation or necessity e.g. *you shouldn't have*. Eisenstein and Bodman refer to expressions such as this as 'expressing lack of necessity/obligation', I have adopted this terminology. In my opinion, expressions such as these, also indicate gratitude and appreciation indirectly, but are not accounted for among the strategies in Aijmer. Here are some examples from the situation where the participant receives a blue sweater as a birthday present.

**3-5** *You shouldn't have. Thank you.*

**3-6** *Oh, thank you so much! You really didn't have to do that.*

A third set of responses that appeared frequently in my material and which also does not fit into the preset categories is what I have referred to as 'expressing appreciation of the object (in question)'. I would suggest seeing this category as a sort of extension of Aijmer's category D 'expressing appreciation of the act'. I would argue that in some of the situations the participants explicitly expressed appreciation of an object relevant to the situation, for instance a present, rather than the act of giving as such. Thus, I have proposed a separate category in addition to Aijmer's categories C and D. Some examples from the situation where the participant receives a birthday present illustrate my point.

**3-7** *Thank you! It's awesome!*

### 3-8 Å, *tusen takk! Så fin den var!*

In these situations *it* and *den*, respectively, are clearly exophoric references to the gift, i.e. the object.

Aijmer, herself, states that she has investigated the most routinised expressions of gratitude and that “the relationship between the linguistic action and strategies is not clear-cut as the speaker can obtain his goal in many different ways. There is an open-ended set of strategies or speech act formulas, which can be classified with regard to directness/ indirectness used and the degree of emotionality (expressiveness’) involved” (Aijmer 1996:38). Subsequently, the categories she introduces are not intended as a restricted set of strategies that cannot be altered, but perhaps as an overview of the most routinised strategies. This is related to the very nature of qualitative research, where the researcher sets out to describe the how and why of human behaviour. Aijmer provides a framework which can be used as a starting point for in-depth analyses of speakers’ thanking strategies, which was my intention in this qualitative study. The speaker can use a variety of strategies to obtain his/her goal, but due to language cultural and cultural differences, the speaker risks the illocutionary force being misunderstood.

One of my research objectives was to determine how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English as a foreign language would express gratitude, thus my intention was to perform a qualitative study describing the material that was provided. In my view, when performing a study such as this, it is important not to restrict oneself to a certain number of categories of classification, but to be open for variation and perhaps adjust and/or expand and complement your system of analysis as you go along. I have chosen to use two different sources to code and analyse the data, to attempt to give a detailed and correct image as possible of the way the Norwegian students expressed gratitude. Thus my formal framework for coding and analysing the material could be illustrated in this way:

**Table 3 My additions to Aijmer's strategies**

| <b>Aijmer's classification</b> |   |   | <b>My additions</b>                              |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>A</b>                       | Thanking somebody explicitly  | e.g. thank you, thanks                        |  |
| <b>B</b>                       | Expressing gratitude  | e.g. I am grateful                            |  |
| <b>C</b>                       | Expressing appreciation of the addressee  | e.g. that's kind of you, that's nice (of you) |  |
| <b>D</b>                       | Expressing appreciation of the act  | e.g. that's lovely, it's appreciated          |  |
|                                |   |   | 'Expressing appreciation of the object'          |
| <b>E</b>                       | Acknowledging a debt of gratitude   | e.g. I owe a debt of gratitude to ...         |  |
|                                |   |   | 'Expressing debt/indebtedness'                   |
| <b>F</b>                       | Stressing one's gratitude   | e.g. I must thank you                         |  |
| <b>G</b>                       | Expressing emotion  | e.g. Oh (thank you)                           |  |
| <b>H</b>                       | Commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's own importance (self-denigration) | e.g. I am an ingrate, I am so careless        |  |
|                                |   |   | 'Expressing lack of necessity and/or obligation' |

After having analysed the material, the responses of the Norwegian participants were compared to those of the British participants and the results reported in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles. The results and the discussion of the results follow in chapters 4 and 5.

## 4 Presentation of the data

As explained in the previous chapters, I have set out to clarify a number of aspects of Norwegian students' pragmatic competence in English by comparing their performance to the results presented in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles and a separate control group consisting of native speakers of British English. I must emphasise that my intention is not to determine which language culture that is the most polite (if it makes sense to talk about one culture being more polite than another at all), but simply to illustrate and compare, as Thomas (1983) puts it, "the linguistic encoding of certain attitudes and values" (Thomas 1983:106). Thomas (1995:150) explains the linguist's task thus: "We can have no access to speaker's real motivation for speaking as they do, and discussions as to whether one group of people is 'politer' than another ... are ultimately futile. As linguists, we have access only to what speakers say and to how their hearers react".

### ***4.1 How do native speakers of Norwegian (students) express gratitude in Norwegian and English?***

In sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.14 below, I will discuss my first two research questions, namely how native speakers of Norwegian (students) express gratitude in Norwegian in the situations formulated by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) and how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English (EFL) express gratitude in these situations in English. I will also present each situation included in the DCT and describe the social factors by using terminology from Brown and Levinson (1988) and Thomas (1995), i.e. the power relationship between the interlocutors, the social distance between them, the size of imposition and the rights and obligations the interlocutors may have in the situation. The situations in the DCT represent a range of levels of formality and require a long or short expression of gratitude or no expression at all (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:169). In their presentation of the results in their 1986 article, Eisenstein and Bodman choose to focus on six of the total fourteen situations. The remaining situations are not considered because they extracted phatic and ritualistic responses which "... whether omitted or expressed ... seem to pass without much attention being given to them by either the speaker or the hearer" (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:171). Here, all the situations will be

considered in order to find out whether there are any differences in sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic behaviour in situations with different social factors. The findings in each situation will be discussed individually and the situations will be presented in the order in which they were presented in the original DCT (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986, 1993). For the Norwegian translation see appendix II.

I have set out to answer my two first research questions

#### **4.1.1 The first situation ‘\$5,00 loan’**

It’s Friday night and you and some of your friends are going out. As you are about to enter the pub, you realise that you’ve forgotten your credit card and that you only have \$2.00 in your wallet. You say ‘Darn, I seem to have forgotten my credit card.’ Your friend asks if you need money and offers to lend you some. He/she asks you how much you need. You say, ‘Could you lend me \$5.00? I’ll pay you back on Monday. Your friend says, ‘Sure. Are you sure you don’t need more than that?’ You say you don’t. Your friend gives you the \$5.00.

In this situation, the relationship between the interlocutors is explicitly stated as being that of friendship –P. The relationship between the interlocutors can be said to be –D as well, due to the closeness of their relationship. In this situation, the size of imposition is relatively small –S, since the amount of money being borrowed is reasonably small. This is assumed to have an effect on the responses. Eisenstein and Bodman, in concordance with Rubin (1983), found that the situations in which the participants felt especially indebted or overwhelmed, the speakers tended to produce longer expressions of gratitude, i.e. the \$5 loan extracted shorter responses than the \$500 loan (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:171). When looking at this situation with regards to Thomas’ fourth dimension, rights and obligations, the hearer in this situation is not obliged to lend the speaker any money and the speaker does not have the right to demand any money of the hearer, –RO. Thus, the hearer provides the speaker a service the speaker is not entitled to in a sense and the hearer repays him/her by expressing gratitude. This is illustrated in some of the responses given by the American participants included in Eisenstein and Bodman’s study (1986:180-181):



**4-1** *Thanks. I really appreciate it.* (A (explicit thanks) + D (exp. appreciation of the act))<sup>1</sup>

**4-2** *Thank you. I'll pay you back on Monday.* (A (explicit thanks) + promise to repay)

Eisenstein and Bodman also noted that in this situation, as in situations 3 'birthday present', 4 'raise', 7 '\$500 loan', 9 'lunch' and 10 'farewell party', "the expression of gratitude could appropriately be thought of as a speech act set, rather than a solitary speech act. In addition to expressing the simple function of thanking, our native-English-speaking subjects regularly expressed other functions such as complimenting, reassuring, promising to repay, expressing surprise and delight, expressing a lack of necessity or obligation, and so on" (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:171). The comments made by Eisenstein and Bodman also apply to the responses given by the Norwegian participants. The native speakers of Norwegian typically used an explicit thanking strategy accompanied by a form of intensification, e.g. *tusen takk* ((a) thousand thanks). Several of the participants also expressed indebtedness and a promise to repay and some also expressed appreciation of the addressee. The same strategies<sup>2</sup> were chosen by Norwegians responding in English. Here are some examples from the Norwegian speakers:

**4-3** *Tusen takk, du får det igjen asap* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, promise to repay)

**4-4** *Takk. Jeg lover at du får det tilbake på mandag altså. Du vet jo at jeg alltid betaler tilbake.* (A (explicit thanks), promise to repay, assurance)

**4-5** *Thank you!! I owe you one ☺ I promise I'll give it back first thing Monday* (A (explicit thanks), expressing debt, promise to repay)

**4-6** *Thank you so much! You're an angel* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, C (exp. appreciation of the addressee))

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<sup>1</sup> The classification in brackets are mainly based on Aijmer's (1996) strategies of expressing gratitude and classification terminology from Eisenstein and Bodman's articles (1986, 1993). The capital letters indicate Aijmer's codification of the strategies.

<sup>2</sup> By strategies here, I mean realisations of the speech act of thanking and refer to Aijmer's classification, see discussion in section 2.1.2.

The British control group, however, did not show the same desire to express indebtedness. Only two of twenty participants expressed a promise to repay. The majority settled for explicit thanking strategies such as, *thank you/thanks/cheers*. Some participants expressed appreciation of the addressee or a vocative indicating appreciation in addition to the explicit thanks. A point to note here is that expressing a promise to repay and the emphasising of indebtedness were more prominent in the English material produced by native speakers of Norwegian compared to material from native speakers of British English. Among the responses given by the American participants in Eisenstein and Bodman's article, both gratitude strategies as well as expressions of debt and promises to repay were represented. The most common expression among the British participants in this situation was a simple explicit strategy e.g.

#### **4-7 Thanks (A (explicit thanks))**

Another common expression was the more colloquial

#### **4-8 Cheers, mate (A (explicit thanks) + vocative)**

### **4.1.2 The second situation 'Bus'**

You board the bus, pay your money and take a seat near the front of the bus. Just before you stop, you signal the driver to stop. You move to the front, the bus comes to a stop, and the doors open.

The relationship between the interlocutors in situation 2 can be described as +D and -P and the size of imposition is relatively small, -S. The rights and obligations dimension is particularly interesting in this situation. The native speakers of American English involved in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 study, especially those who were living in large cities, stated that they would not say anything to the driver if he/she was doing his/her job in a routine manner (1986:171). Similarly, Coulmas points out that the object of gratitude or the size of the favour are important in considering how to respond (Coulmas 1981:8-9). Aijmer states that "another factor determining the type of thanks is whether the setting is the place of work or a person's home. In the former case, a small favour may be done routinely because it is the person's job to do it" (1996:67). This

indicates that many of the participants saw it as the bus driver's obligation to open the front door for them and thus used phatic expressions of gratitude or no expression at all.

The majority of responses given in Norwegian were either a greeting or no response at all. Five of seventeen also chose to use an explicit thanking strategy, one of which combined the thanking strategy with a greeting.

**4-9** *Ha det bra!* (Greeting)

**4-10** *Takk, ha det bra!* (A (explicit thanks), greeting)

The absolute majority of Norwegian participants who expressed themselves in English chose a greeting in this situation

**4-11** *Good bye, have a nice day!* (Greeting, greeting)

**4-12** *Bye* (Greeting)

whereas the eighteen out of twenty of the British participants used an explicit thanking strategy, e.g.

**4-13** *Thank you.* (A (explicit thanks))

**4-14** *Thanks.* (A (explicit thanks))

**4-15** *Cheers.* (A (explicit thanks))

Only one of the British participants chose to use a greeting, notably combined with an explicit thanking strategy, as opposed to the majority of Norwegian participants responding in English. Interestingly, many of the Norwegian participants chose to opt out in Norwegian, while the majority Norwegian participants responding in English chose to say something. This may be related to the rights and obligation dimension in that the participants may see it as the bus driver's obligation to open the front door for them in Norway, but that they are not sure whether they can demand the same in an English-speaking culture. As the examples above illustrate, different realisations of Aijmer's category A (explicit thanks) occurred in the answers from the British participants. One of

the participants commented on his answer and explained that his realisation would vary between *cheers*, *cheers mate*, *thanks* and *thank you* depending on the age and the gender of the driver.

#### **4.1.3 The third situation 'Birthday present'**

It's your birthday, and you are having a few people over for dinner. A friend brings you a present. You unwrap it and find a blue sweater.

The relationship between the interlocutors in situation 3 is also explicitly stated as being that of friendship, i.e. –P and –D. However, the size of imposition is perhaps slightly bigger than the one described in situation 1, therefore I have classified it as +S. In this situation, the hearer has done something which he/she was not obliged to do and which the speaker does not have the right to demand –RO. The British participants' most common response to the 'birthday present' situation was explicit thanks. Some of the participants combined this strategy with an expression of appreciation of the gift or of the addressee (using a vocative).

**4-16** *Thank you* (A (explicit thanks))

**4-17** *Cheers, mate* (A (explicit thanks), vocative)

**4-18** *Thank you – blue is my favourite colour* (A (explicit thanks), expressing appreciation of the object)

An intensified explicit thanks was the most common strategy in the Norwegian data as well. Additionally, many of the participants expressed emotions or appreciation of the gift.

**4-19** *Tusen takk, den var kjempefin* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. appreciation of the object)

**4-20** *Å, tusen takk, den var kjempefine* [sic!] (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. appreciation of the object)

In the English material provided by native speakers of Norwegian, an intensified explicit thanking strategy was the most common strategy. This was typically combined with other strategies, e.g. appreciation of the gift, appreciation of the addressee and lack of necessity or obligation, e.g.

**4-21** *Oh, thank you so much! I like this color* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. appreciation of the object)

**4-22** *Oh, thank you so much! You really [sic!] didn't have to do that.* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. lack of obligation or necessity)

A comparison of the responses from the British participants with those of the Norwegian participants indicates some differences between the two groups of participants. The Norwegian participants used several strategies combined, both when expressing themselves in English and Norwegian, whereas the majority of British participants disfavoured combinations of strategies in this situation.

Only three of the twenty participants combined explicit thanks with an expression of appreciation. Two of the three speakers expressed appreciation of the gift, whereas the third expressed appreciation of the addressee.

**4-23** *Thank you. I just love blue.* (A (explicit thanks), expressing appreciation of the object)

One of the British participants expressed emotions in addition to an explicit thanking strategy.

**4-24** *Oh wow! Thank you so much.* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks) + intensification)

The examples of responses given in Appendix B in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 article illustrate the same tendency as in my Norwegian material, namely that of combining strategies (1986:181).

**4-25** *Oh, wow! Thank you so much. It's really nice.* (G (expressing emotion), G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. appreciation of the object)

**4-26** *Oh, you know me so well. Thanks, I love it.* (G (expressing emotion), C (expressing appreciation of the addressee), A (explicit thanks), exp. appreciation of the object)

#### **4.1.4 The fourth situation 'Raise'**

You work for a large company. The Vice-President of Personnel calls you into his office. He tells you to sit down. You feel a bit nervous, because you have only been working there for six months. The Vice-President says 'You're doing a good job. In fact we are so pleased with you that I'm going to give you a \$20.00 a week raise.'

The relationship between the speaker and the hearer could be described as +P and +D. The size of imposition can be characterised as great +S as well. I have characterised the rights and obligation dimension in this situation as –RO. The hearer is not obliged to give the speaker a raise in this situation, but does it based on the speaker's performance, as opposed to other situations involving a raise where the speaker might feel entitled to a raise or even demand a raise. Variables such as a great social distance and hearer power are said to extract long and intensified expressions of gratitude, i.e. to express greater politeness (Brown & Levinson 1988:83). However, the responses given in my material varied with regards to this point. Eisenstein and Bodman state that they generally "... found that situations which made the speaker feel especially indebted, surprised, etc. produced longer expressions of gratitude (1986:171). However, the responses given in this situation deviated from this 'norm'.

Our data showed reticence on the part of the employee – thanker – even though participants were told that they felt surprised, relieved, and grateful. The reticence seemed to indicate a desire to preserve emotional neutrality and maintain the social distance required by the disparate roles. Native speakers told us that they would not want their boss to think they were over-grateful and, thus, undeserving of the raise. (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:171-172)

The results from my British control group indicated similar behaviour. The absolute majority of participants chose to thank the vice-president of personnel by using an explicit thanking strategy, e.g.

**4-27** *Thank you* (A (explicit thanks))

Five of the participants also chose to opt out and not say anything at all.

Contrary to the native speakers of English, the Norwegian participants who responded to this situation in Norwegian produced overall rather lengthy responses. Their answers differed but, expressing emotion seemed to be a central element in their responses. Many participants expressed appreciation of the act and some stressed their gratitude explicitly, while most expressed either surprise or uncertainty.

**4-28** *Oi, så utrolig hyggelig av deg. Det setter jeg utrolig stor pris på* (G (expressing emotion), C (expressing appreciation of the addressee, F (stressing one's own gratitude))

**4-29** *Ehm, takk. Men hva har jeg gjort for å fortjene det?* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks), exp. uncertainty)

**4-30** *Oj! Gjør dere? Så bra! Hyggelig å høre at dere synes jeg gjør en god jobb!* (G (expressing emotion), exp. uncertainty, G (expressing emotion), exp. pleasure)

The Norwegian participants who responded in English gave similar responses as the Norwegians who responded in Norwegian. Expressions of surprise and sometimes even uncertainty occurred here as well. Similar to the Norwegian participants responding in Norwegian, all of the Norwegian participants who responded in English produced lengthy gratitude expressions by combining different strategies. Two of the participants responding in English used a vocative as a form of intensification;

**4-31** *Thank you very much sir. I'll keep up the good work!* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, vocative, exp. promise to keep up the good work)

**4-32** *Wow! Thank you, Sir. I'm happy you are so pleased with me.* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks), vocative, exp. pleasure)

This also occurred in Eisenstein and Bodman's material, e.g. *Mr ....., thank you very much* (1986:181). Eisenstein and Bodman do not state how often this occurred in their material and they include only one example in their appendix. This was completely

absent in the British material. Thomas points out that the use of 'honourifics' such as *Sir* are very rarely used in British English, but rather frequent in American English (Thomas 1995:151). Similarly, Røkaas argues that the use of names and titles are infrequent in Norwegian, but frequent in American English. One of the Norwegian participants who used a vocative as a sign of deference, *Sir*, had lived and/or studied in the US for four years, which may be regarded as a source of influence. The other participant, however, had not. It is difficult to say what may have influenced these participants to use this strategy, but another influence may be experience from formal international business behaviour. This type of deference is not common in Norwegian business culture. Gesteland states that "business visitors find Norwegians very egalitarian and less formal than people from more hierarchical cultures" (Gesteland 2003:294). He also points out that "although Norwegians usually address each other rather informally, first names are less commonly used than in the US" (Gesteland 2003:294).

One of the Norwegian participants who responded in English chose to opt out in this situation, but although a significant amount of British participants chose to do the same thing, this does not necessary mean that the Norwegian participant opted out for the same reason as they did. There are several reasons for opting out, e.g. the speaker can judge the size of imposition to be too small, the speaker may opt out due to the reasons discussed above, i.e. as an indication of respect or not to seem undeserving of the raise, the solution to opt out may also be chosen as an option when one simply does not know what to say.

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986:172) state that the responses given in this situation did not differ significantly from the responses given in the friendlier situations. They point out that the differences were that there were fewer expressions of surprise and complimenting. Eisenstein and Bodman suggest that "further investigation is needed, but in expressing gratitude, it may be that formality is conveyed by what is not said, as well as through specially marked lexical items" (1986:172). This is very interesting when comparing their results and the results from my British control group with those from the Norwegian participants. The Norwegian participants used long, elaborate and intensified expressions of gratitude both in English and Norwegian and were not afraid to express surprise as well as disbelief.



These results have interesting implications for Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. They indicate that the degree of indirectness used by the speaker increases in accordance with the power of the hearer over the speaker. To illustrate how a speaker measures the total weight of the FTA, Brown and Levinson argue that the request 'Excuse me sir, would it be alright if I smoke?' might be said by an employee to his/her boss, while 'Mind if I smoke?' might have been said by the boss to the employee in the same situation. They state that the only variable that changes in these two situations is that of power, P, and that this factor that influences the degree of indirectness used (Brown & Levinson 1988:80). The implications made by Brown and Levinson neither fit the pattern shown in the data provided by native speakers of English in my study nor the results of Eisenstein and Bodman's study.

#### **4.1.5 The fifth situation 'Supermarket'**

In the supermarket, the cashier puts your groceries in bags and turns to begin checking out the next customer. You pick up your bags and leave.

This situation could be described as -P, +D and -S. I would argue that there is a limited difference in power between the cashier and the customer in a situation like this; however, it is not evident who has power over whom. In one sense, the customer has power over the cashier, because the customer is entitled to a service which the cashier is expected to provide. On the other hand, the cashier has power over the customer in that the cashier could have the customer thrown out of the shop. I have classified the difference in power as being small, because there is no evident difference in power between the interlocutors. The different roles of the speaker (customer) and hearer (cashier) can be related to Thomas' rights and obligations dimension. The responses given by the American participants and their comments on their own responses in Eisenstein and Bodman's studies indicated that the hearer in this situation, similar to the situation with the bus driver, was simply doing his/her job and thus obliged to perform this service to the customers (the role the speakers played) +RO. The social distance between the interlocutors is great. It is not stated in the description of the situation that the cashier and the customer know each other, thus one can conclude that they are not very close. I would characterise the size of imposition as being relatively small here.

For reasons discussed earlier, this situation was not included in the Norwegian translation of the questionnaire. However, one of the groups of Norwegian participants responded to the situation in English. The majority of these participants used a greeting in this situation, only five of which were accompanied by explicit thanks. One of the respondents indicated that she was not sure whether she would have included *thanks* or simply said *good bye*.

#### **4-33 Bye (Greeting)**

#### **4-34 Thanks, good bye (A (explicit thanks), greeting)**

The responses given by the British control group differed from the Norwegian participants' responses. Only two of the participants produced a greeting in this situation, both accompanied by explicit thanks. Half of the British participants chose to opt out. The other half generally chose an explicit thanking strategy. The most common forms of explicit strategy used were *thanks* and *thank you*, but *cheers* occurred as well.

As for the American results, the native speakers of American English either used ritualistic phatic explicit thanking strategies or chose to opt out. As pointed out when looking at the situation with the bus driver, some native speakers of American English indicated that they would not say anything at all to the cashier if the cashier simply did his/her job. Others claimed that they would thank anyone who did anything for them. Eisenstein and Bodman state that "The expression of thanks in these situations seems to be a social amenity" (1986:171).

#### **4.1.6 The sixth situation 'Face'**

At a table in a restaurant a friend says, 'You have something on your face.' You ask where. Your friend tells you. You rub your face and ask, 'is it off?' Your friend says that it is.

The variables in situation 6 can be classified as -P, -D, -S. Eisenstein and Bodman report that this situation was usually followed by a quick *thanks*, sometimes followed by a question of confirmation *is it off?* or sometimes a joke "to make light of the potentially embarrassing situation" (1986:171). A response in the form of a joke also appeared in the British material,

**4-35** *Can't take me anywhere, eh?* (Joke)

Another joking/good-humoured response was

**4-36** *Good job you're here, pal. Otherwise I'd look right stupid.* (C (expressing appreciation of the addressee) + joke?)

The most common response, however, among the respondents in the British control group was to opt out. The second most common response was, as Eisenstein and Bodman report, to use a quick *thanks*.

The participants who responded in Norwegian frequently used an explicit thanking strategy combined with a specification of what he/she was thanking for or expressed gratitude and appreciation for the act itself. Some also commented on the result.

**4-37** *Takk for at du sa ifra* (A (explicit thanks) + specification)

**4-38** *Bra* (Commenting on the result)

The Norwegian participants who responded in English frequently used the same strategy as the majority of Norwegian participants expressing themselves in Norwegian. Some settled for an explicit strategy only, while two chose to opt out. One chose a joking response in the same way as the British participants above, e.g.

**4-39** *That's what friends are for* (Joke)

**4.1.7 The seventh situation '\$500 loan'**

You find yourself in a sudden need of money - \$500.00. You mention this to a friend. Your friend immediately offers to lend it to you. You are surprised and very grateful. Your friend gives you \$500.00. At first you say, 'Oh no, I didn't mean for you to lend it to me. I couldn't take it. Your friend says, 'Really it's alright. What are friends for?' After your friend insists again, you take the money.

As pointed out in section 4.1.1 above, Eisenstein and Bodman noted that the '\$500 loan' situation produced longer gratitude expressions than the '\$5,00 loan'

situation, because the size of imposition is greater, +S. The variables such as social setting and relationship etc. are the same as in the '\$5,00 loan' situation. Eisenstein and Bodman also report that this situation elicited "certain semantic information", but that the appearance of routines was abundant (1986:172). The participants tended to use exaggerations to emphasise their gratitude.

**4-40** *This is a lifesaver*

**4-41** *You saved my life*

**4-42** *You're a lifesaver*

The Norwegian results show the same tendency as Eisenstein and Bodman indicated, in that the responses were longer than in the '\$5,00' situation. However, the characteristic feature of the Norwegian participants' responses was the expressing of indebtedness and assurance that they would pay the hearer back as soon as possible. An intensified explicit thanking strategy and expressing appreciation of the addressee were also two common strategies. The Norwegian participants who expressed themselves in English generally expressed indebtedness and promise to repay. Several also expressed appreciation of the addressee.

**4-43** *Jeg skylder deg en stor tjeneste! Tusen takk, der redda du meg virkelig. Lover å betale deg tilbake så fort jeg får penger.* (Exp. debt, A (explicit thanks) + intensification, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee), promise to repay)

**4-44** *Tusen takk, du får dem snart igjen altså.* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, promise to repay)

**4-45** *You'll get the money back as soon as possible* (Promise to repay)

**4-46** *You really shouldn't have to, but I really appreciate this, ow [sic!] you one!* (Exp. lack of obligation or necessity, F (stressing one's own gratitude), exp. debt)

**4-47** *Thank you so much! I'll pay'em back as soon as possible. You're the best!* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, promise to repay, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee))

Some of the British participants also expressed a promise to repay or some kind of uncertainty, i.e. asking for confirmation or assurance that they could borrow the money. Another more frequent response in the material was explicit thanks, potentially followed by a vocative or another type of appreciation of the addressee or appreciation of the act itself.

**4-48** *Thank you. It's a great help. I promise I'll pay it back soon.* (A (explicit thanks), D (expressing appreciation of the act), promise to repay)

**4-49** *Thank you – are you really sure?* (A (explicit thanks), exp. uncertainty)

**4-50** *Thanks – you're a great mate.* (A (explicit thanks), C (expressing appreciation of the addressee))

#### **4.1.8 The eighth situation 'Married'**

You are married. Both you and your spouse work. You come home late from work and find that your spouse has done some work around the house that you had promised to do, but had not had a chance to do.

I have established the variables in this situation as follows –P, –D, +S and –RO. I would argue that the size of imposition here is somewhat great and as a result, I have chosen to classify it as +S. However, in my opinion, the size of imposition is not clear-cut in this situation. I have argued that these social factors need to be seen as endpoints on a continuum and in this situation the size of imposition, in my view, is relatively close to the middle of the continuum rather than to either of the endpoints. I have chosen to classify it as +S, because I regard it as slightly closer to that end of the continuum. However, my opinion may be influenced by the fact that I am a native speaker of Norwegian and that the responses made by the Norwegians indicated that the size of imposition above is considered severe. Eisenstein and Bodman report that the most typical response in situation 8 was an expression of thanks followed by a compliment or an expression of affection (1986:171). The majority of responses given by the British participants were similar to the results reported in the article. Several of the participants chose an explicit thanking strategy followed or preceded by a compliment, a vocative or another form of appreciation of the hearer or the act. One participant expressed lack of

necessity or obligation, while two other participants used another speech act altogether, namely an apology.

**4-51** *Thanks for doing the jobs, you really are great.* (A (explicit thanks) + specifying, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee))

**4-52** *Cheers, love. What's for dinner?* (A (explicit thanks), vocative, question (different subject/joke?))

Apologies were more common among the Norwegian participants. The absolute majority of Norwegian participants, whether giving responses in Norwegian or English, expressed lack of necessity or obligation or chose to apologise. A thanking strategy or a combination of thanking strategies only were chosen by only four of the Norwegian participants among those who responded in English, of whom one had lived and/or studied in the US. Among the Norwegian participants expressing themselves in Norwegian, only three used a thanking strategy or several thanking strategies only, one of which had lived and/or studied abroad.

**4-53** *Oi! der har du gjort det ja! Beklaget!* (G (expressing emotion) + elaboration, apology)

**4-54** *Tusen takk, det var veldig snilt, men jeg hadde tenkt til å gjøre det så fort jeg hadde fått tid!* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee), exp. intention)

**4-55** *Du hadde ikke trengt å gjøre det, vennen min. Jeg tar oppvasken idag* (Exp. lack of necessity or obligation, vocative, suggestion to repay)

**4-56** *Thank you, I know I had promised to do this, but it's alright, I'll do the work for both of us next time.* (A (explicit thanks), exp. intention, suggestion of how to repay)

**4-57** *Oh, you didn't have to do that.. I was going to do it sooner or later, I just haven't had the time to do it yet. But thanks a lot, I'll try not to let it happen again.* (G (expressing emotion), exp. lack of necessity or obligation, exp. intention, A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. assurance (that it will never happen again.))

**4-58** *Oh, honny, [sic!] I said I'd clean the house. I just haven't had the time to do it yet. I'm sorry. The next time I'll promise to do it!* (G (expressing emotion), vocative, exp. intention, apology, exp. debt)

#### **4.1.9 The ninth situation 'Lunch'**

Your friend suggests going out to lunch. You say that you'd like to go, but you only have \$2.00. Your friend says, 'Ah, don't worry. I'll take you today.' Your friend takes you to a very nice restaurant – a much more expensive than the ones you usually go to. You have a wonderful meal. Your friend pays, and you get up to leave.

The variables in this situation can be characterised as –P, –D, +S and –RO. I would characterise the size of imposition here as being relatively great, because, as can be identified from the description, the restaurant is described as more expensive than usual, which, in my view, has an effect on the size of imposition. The examples of native speakers' responses given in Appendix B in Eisenstein and Bodman's article illustrate that many expressed thanks as well as a promise to reciprocate, e.g. (1986:182).

**4-59** *Thank you for lunch. Next time it's my treat.*

Combinations such as this occurred in my British material as well. Some of the participants chose to express debt in addition to expressing thanks, e.g.

**4-60** *Thanks for lunch. I'll pay next time.* (A (explicit thanks) + specifying, exp. debt)

The majority of British participants, however, settled for explicit thanks only, e.g.

**4-61** *Thank you.* (A (explicit thanks))

Some also chose to opt out.

None of the Norwegian participants chose to opt out. The absolute most central characteristic feature of the responses given in Norwegian was expressing debt. The

majority of participants expressed debt and/or a desire to do it again, sometimes preceded or followed by an explicit thanks.

**4-62** *Sikker på at det går bra, du får igjen* (Exp. uncertainty, promise to repay)

**4-63** *Neste gang er det min tur å spandere. Dette var kjempekoselig! Tusen takk.* (Exp. debt, D (expressing appreciation of the act), A (explicit thanks) + intensification)

**4-64** *Hadde jeg visst vi skulle på en så eksklusiv restaurant hadde jeg ikke latt deg spandere. Neste gang er det jeg som spanderer. Tusen takk for den gode maten.* (Exp. lack of necessity and/or obligation, exp. debt, A (explicit thanks) + intensification + specification)

This type of responses was also characteristic for the English responses given by the Norwegian participants. Several expressed appreciation of the act or of the lunch as well as indebtedness.

**4-65** *I don't know how to thank you. This was really a splendid meal. Next time I'll take you. If I have enough money, that is... haha! No, really, I want to make up for this.* (E (acknowledging a debt of gratitude), exp. appreciation of object, exp. debt, joke, exp. debt)

**4-66** *Thank you so much for the meal. I'll take you out some other time.* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification + specification, exp. debt)

**4-67** *You didn't have to take me to such a fancy place, we could have gone to McDonald's! But you're very kind, and I'll take you out some time too, and then you're not allowed to pay!* (Exp. lack of necessity and/or obligation, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee), exp. debt)

#### **4.1.10 The tenth situation 'Farewell party'**

You have just gotten a new and better job. A friend at the office tells you she has organized a farewell party for you.

I would characterise the variables in this situation as -P, -D and +S. I would argue that the size of imposition here is great due to the fact that arranging a party is quite a lot of work and that someone has put in a lot of effort in your honour qualifies as +S, in



my opinion. This is reflected in the many expressions of emotions in the responses. With regards to the rights and obligations dimension, the description does not state that the hearer is obliged to arrange a farewell party for the speaker, thus it is indicated that he/she has done it out of his/her own will, –RO.

Based on the examples given in the appendix in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 article, this situation extracted expressions of emotion, category G in Aijmer's strategies. (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:183)

**4-68** *Oh, wow. That's very nice. Thank you.* (G (expressing emotion), G (expressing emotion), D (expressing appreciation of the act), A (explicit thanks))

This was also common in my Norwegian material. The majority of Norwegians who expressed themselves in Norwegian produced emotional responses, most commonly surprise and pleasure. Many of them also expressed appreciation of the act or of the addressee. The Norwegians who expressed themselves in English also frequently expressed surprise and other emotions. Nine of seventeen expressed appreciation of the addressee and sometimes also of the act. In addition to expressing emotions a very common feature of the responses given by Norwegian participants expressing themselves in English was expressing lack of necessity or obligation. Seven of the seventeen Norwegian participants expressed lack of necessity or obligation in English.

**4-69** *Så koselig! Tusen takk, så snill du er.* (D (expressing appreciation of the act), A (explicit thanks) + intensification, C (expressing appreciation of the addressee))

**4-70** *Oi! Takk, det hadde du ikke trengt!* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks), exp. lack of necessity and/or obligation)

**4-71** *Thank you so much, you shouldn't have done that!* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification, exp. lack of necessity and/or obligation)

**4-72** *Oh, that's so nice thank you!* (G (expressing emotion), D (expressing appreciation of the act), A (explicit thanks))

The responses varied among the British participants. A minority chose to express lack of necessity or obligation. Some offered to help, while others asked what time it was, etc. Only one participant expressed emotions explicitly. The majority chose simple explicit thanks.

**4-73** *Great, thanks – when is it?* (G (expressing emotion), A (explicit thanks), question (different subject))

**4-74** *Thanks – hope it wasn't too much trouble. When is it?* (A (explicit thanks), minimizing the size of imposition, (different subject))

**4-75** *Thank you* (A (explicit thanks))

An interesting point to note here is that four of the twenty participants chose to opt out. Perhaps this can be explained by what Eisenstein and Bodman stated in connection with the 'raise' situation, about how "it may be that formality is conveyed by what is not said" (1896:172). Perhaps they feel that they are expected to maintain a certain level of formality in the workplace.

#### **4.1.11 The eleventh situation 'Hairstyle'**

You have just gotten your hair cut in a new style, and you like it better than the old way. Your friend sees you and says, 'Hey, you've got a new haircut. It looks nice.'

The variables in this setting can be characterised as –P, –D, –S and –RO. In Eisenstein and Bodman's material of native speakers of American English, situation 11 commonly produced an expression of thanks followed by a redundant question or an expression of pleasure (1986:171). Explicit thanks only, explicit thanks followed by a redundant question and explicit thanks followed by an expression of emotion were the responses that occurred in my British English material as well. Some of the British participants used the form explicit thanks + vocative, i.e. the common British expression *cheers, mate*. The most common expression among the British participants was explicit thanks alone.

**4-76** *Thanks* (A (explicit thanks))

**4-77** *Thanks – I wasn't sure at first, but....* (A (explicit thanks), exp. uncertainty)

**4-78** *Cheers, mate* (A (explicit thanks), vocative)

A common response among the Norwegian participants answering in English was an explicit thanks followed by a redundant question or an expression of uncertainty. Aijmer and Olsson (1990:86) suggest that in English it is common to use an explicit thanking strategy when given a compliment, whereas in Swedish, it is common to reformulate the compliment into a question, e.g. *tycker du verkligen det* (=Do you really think so). Several of the participants also expressed emotions and their own opinion of the new hairstyle. This means that the English responses given by Norwegians tended to be more elaborate and longer than the majority of responses given by native speakers of British English. The responses given in English by Norwegians were more similar to the results described by Eisenstein and Bodman, as mentioned above. The responses given by Norwegians in Norwegian, however, were more similar to the British responses. The most common response was explicit thanks, some of which were followed by an expression of the speakers' opinions.

**4-79** *Takk.* (A (explicit thanks))

**4-80** *Jo takk. Til og med fornøyd denne gangen. Det skjer jo ikke så ofte, hehe.* (A (explicit thanks) (+modal particle indicating uncertainty), exp. opinion)

**4-81** *Thanks, I am quite satisfied.* (A (explicit thanks), exp. opinion)

**4-82** *Thanks, do you really think so?* (A (explicit thanks), exp. uncertainty)

#### **4.1.12 The twelfth situation 'Newspaper'**

You are sharing an apartment with a friend. You're both sitting and relaxing in the living room. You ask your friend to hand you the newspaper which is nearby. Your friend gives you the newspaper.

The variables in this situation can be classified similarly as those in situation 11, – P, –D, –S and –RO. Situation 12 was one of the situations which elicited phatic ritualistic responses according to Eisenstein and Bodman. This was also evident in the responses from the British control group. All of the respondents used an explicit thanking strategy,

some included a vocative as in *cheers, mate*. The Norwegian participants who responded in English used the same strategy, an explicit thanking strategy. However, none of them used the typical British English *cheers*. This may have been because the explanation of the situation told the participants to imagine that they were living in the US for a while. The results might have been different if they were asked to imagine that they were living in the UK. An alternative explanation could be that the input they receive outside (or in connection with) their studies is more Americanised, i.e. perhaps they watch more American films than British ones and are not so used to this expression. The Norwegians who answered in Norwegian generally used an explicit thanking strategy as well, but there were four respondents who deviated from this 'norm' by specifying what they were thanking for, using intensification or expressing appreciation of the addressee in addition to the explicit strategy. There may be a number of reasons for this individual variation. However, the majority used the strategy 'expected' based on the results reported by Eisenstein and Bodman and the response given by the British participants.

**4-83** *Thanks* (A)

**4-84** *Takk skal du ha!* (A + specification)

#### **4.1.13 The thirteenth situation 'Parking'**

You pick up your car in a parking garage. As the attendant who drove up your car walks past you to get the next person's car, you hand him a tip.

This situation is similar to the 'shop' and the 'bus' situations with regards to the description of the social variables. Here, the variables can be classified as -P, +D and -S. Similar to the situations with the bus driver and the cashier, the hearer's act can be seen as an obligation stated in his/her job description, and thus the speaker have the right to demand that the hearer drives the speaker's car out of the parking garage +RO. This situation was not included in the Norwegian translation due to reasons discussed earlier. This situation may seem alien to native speakers of Norwegian, because this is not a common practice in Norway, which again may be reflected in the responses from the Norwegian participants. Eisenstein and Bodman do not say anything in particular about this situation other than that it belongs to the group of situations which elicited phatic,

ritualistic responses. The results, as suggested by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), showed the same tendency as the British control group. The majority of British participants chose to opt out, but the rest generally chose an explicit thanking strategy.

The Norwegians who responded in English used a range of strategies. In the material there are examples of explicit strategies, opting out, greetings and the most common ‘leaving the hearer the option to accept the favour’. The factor that may have triggered this response was the fact that the speaker, in the situation, is handing the driver a tip. When you hand someone something you generally say *vær så god* (*here you are/please*) in Norwegian. This expression is also a common “thanking ‘responder’” in Swedish (Aijmer 1996:40). “Responses to an act of thanking seem to be infrequent in English compared with many other languages (Swedish, Russian, German) and only a few strategies are represented [footnote deleted]. In Swedish, four different strategies are used” (Aijmer 1996:40) of which *var så god* (corresponding to the Norwegian *vær så god*) is one. The Norwegian speakers may have imagined that the driver would have said ‘thank you’ when receiving the tip and that they in course would have used the responder *vær så god*. They could also have imagined that they said *vær så god* and then the driver would have said *thank you*. Thirdly, the speaker may not have imagined a *thank you* at all, but still use *vær så god*, which even though it is classified as a responder, does not necessarily have to be a response to anything.

**4-85** *Have a nice day* (Greeting)

**4-86** *Here you go. Thanks for taking care of my car.* (Leaving the hearer the option to accept the favour, A (explicit thanks) + specifying)

**4-87** *Thank you. Here you go* (A (explicit thanks), leaving the hearer the option to accept the favour)

**4-88** *Here, take this* (Leaving the hearer the option to accept the favour)

#### **4.1.14 The fourteenth situation ‘Dinner party’**

You have been invited to the home of a rather new friend. You have dinner with him and his wife and a few other friends of theirs. The food was great, and you really enjoyed the evening. As you leave, your hosts accompany you to the door.

The variables in this situation can be classified as –P, –D, +S and –RO. It is not clear-cut as to whether the distance should be classified as +D or –D. The hearer described in the situation is described as a friend, but a new friend, which may imply that the speaker and the hearer may not have gotten as close as old friends yet. However, classifying the distance as relatively small may also be somewhat problematic. There is reason to believe that the Norwegian participants would interpret the situation differently from that of the American participants. As Røkaas points out “it has been said that Americans will invite you to dinner at their homes in order to get to know you better. Norwegians wait to invite you until they know you very well. Crossing the threshold into a Norwegian home is an important indicator of your standing with the Norwegian” (Røkaas 2000:118). Despite this, I have chosen to classify the distance here as being that of –D, due to the description of the relationship as being that of friendship and thus closer than e.g. two strangers, etc.

The responses given by native speakers in this situation were relatively long. According to the examples included in the article (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:183) they typically consisted of an expression of thanks, an expression of pleasure and a desire to continue the relationship, e.g. (1986:183)

**4-89** *Thank you for a wonderful evening. I hope we'll get together again soon.* (A (explicit thanks) + specification, exp. desire to continue the relationship (reciprocate))

**4-90** *Thank you for inviting me. I really enjoyed myself and dinner was delicious. Let's get together again soon.* (A (explicit thanks) + specification, exp. pleasure, exp. appreciation of the object, exp. desire to continue the relationship (reciprocate))

The examples of responses given in Eisenstein and Bodman's article were similar to the responses given by the British participants. Many of the British participants thanked the hostess for being invited and expressed appreciation of the food and the evening as such.

**4-91** *Great evening – thank you for inviting me.* (Exp. appreciation of the object, A (explicit thanks) + specification)

**4-92** *Hope we can do this again some time. Thanks. Good night.* (Exp. desire to continue the relationship, A (explicit thanks), greeting)

The Norwegian participants who answered in Norwegian gave similar answers as the British and the American participants. The Norwegian participants generally expressed appreciation of the object (the evening, the food, etc.) They also expressed desire to continue the relationship in the same way as the other participants. However, their motivation may perhaps differ. Eisenstein and Bodman classified utterances such as *Let's get together again soon* as an expression of desire to continue the relationship. I suspect that the Norwegians, who uttered responses such as this, did it to offer a sort of reciprocation. I am sure that they also wanted to continue the relationship with their new friend, but I believe they may feel like they are in debt to the hearer and therefore offer to reciprocate by uttering responses such as the example above. The reason for my suspicion is the high frequency of expressions of indebtedness in several of the situations. Thus it seems to be important in Norwegian culture to even out the score and to re-establish the relationship the way it was before the act was performed. Of course, this may as well be the reason for why several of the American participants chose this strategy. As I mentioned above, Eisenstein and Bodman argue that this is an indication that the speaker wants to continue the relationship, but it could be that Americans wish to reciprocate as well. However, Røkaas (2000:118) states that social obligation, such as inviting someone to visit, is not taken lightly in Norway, as opposed to in America where such expressions often are superficial. It may also be that we need to distinguish between the responses given by the Norwegians. An expression like “dere må komme til oss snart” seems more binding than “vi sees”.

The Norwegian participants who expressed themselves in English also gave elaborate responses including expressions of appreciation and desire to continue the relationship. They also specified what they were thanking for, which is very common in Norwegian.

**4-93** *Tusen takk for i kveld. Det har vært utrolig kjekt, og maten var bare lovely! Dere får komme til oss en gang snart. God kveld.* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification)

+specification, exp. appreciation of the object x 2, exp. desire to continue the relationship (reciprocate), greeting)

**4-94** *Takk for meg. Det var veldig hyggelig å være her. Vi snakkes.* (A (explicit thanks) + specifying, exp. appreciation of the object, exp. desire to continue the relationship)

**4-95** *Det var utruleg god mat, og eg har hatt det utruleg kjekt! Dette må me gjera igjen!* (Exp. appreciation of the object, exp. opinion, exp. desire to continue the relationship)

**4-96** *Thanks a lot for inviting me, I had a really good time. The food was excellent too. See you!* (A (explicit thanks) + specifying, exp. opinion, exp. appreciation of the object, exp. desire to continue the relationship)

**4-97** *Thank you so much for inviting me. The dinner was great and I had a really nice evening.* (A (explicit thanks) + intensification + specification, exp. appreciation of the object, exp. opinion)

**4-98** *Thanks for having me* (A (explicit thanks) + specification)

The preceding sections illustrate that the way the Norwegian participants respond in Norwegian is similar to that of the native speakers of English in several situations. This indicates several situations in which transfer would be positive. However, there are some situations, e.g. 'raise' and 'married' in which there is a significant risk of negative transfer. In this chapter, I have merely illustrated the way the respondents expressed themselves. These responses will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.



## 5 Discussion

In the previous chapter, I presented the general tendencies in the responses from the DCT and attempted to answer two of my research questions, i.e. how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of English, EFL, express gratitude in Norwegian and in English. In the following chapter, the focus will be on discussing these results. The responses given by the participants indicate that there are differences with regards to how the participants would express gratitude in Norwegian and English. In the following sections, I will look at these differences in more detail and try to determine whether or not any instances of pragmatic transfer occurred and if they occurred, whether these instances could lead to cross-cultural communicative failure, misunderstandings or negative stereotypic impressions. Furthermore, I will consider my fifth and final research question, i.e. whether the performance of the participants in the DCT may tell us anything about any underlying differences in the respective politeness systems and finally, whether Norwegians participants of English at University level have sufficient pragmatic competence to express gratitude successfully in English. I will start by presenting an overview of the general tendencies in the collected data to illustrate when the Norwegians choose similar strategies in English to what they do in Norwegian, when they diverge from the Norwegian strategies and choose something more similar to the American/British speakers or whether they are doing something altogether different. Secondly, I will discuss the possible cases of pragmatic transfer and the potential reasons for transfer. In section 5.1.3, I will discuss the reflections of potential underlying differences in the politeness systems of American and British English and Norwegian.

### 5.1 Transfer

**Table 4 An overview of the general tendencies in the responses**

| <b>The general tendencies in the responses/<br/>The situations</b> | <b>The American responses (as indicated by Eisenstein and Bodman 1986)</b> | <b>The British responses</b>   | <b>The Norwegian responses</b>   | <b>The English responses given by the Norwegian participants</b>              |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>1. ‘\$5,00 loan’</b>  | short expression of gratitude, sometimes followed by a promise to repay    | - 20/20 explicit thanking strategies.<br>-6 of 20 in comb. with appreciation of the addressee<br>-2/20 in comb. with | -12/17 intensified explicit thanking strategies<br>- 6 of 17 in comb. with | -14/17 explicit thanking strategies.<br>-3 /17 intensified thanking strategy. |

|                              |  |   |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
|                              |  | promise to repay  | indebtedness   | -5/17 expressed indebtedness   |
| <b>2. 'Bus'</b>              | Phatic, routinised gratitude expressions. Some chose to opt out.   | -18/20 explicit thanking strategy<br>-1/20 in comb. with a greeting<br>- 2/20 opted out   | -7/17 opted out<br>-6/17 greeting, -4/17 explicit thanking strategy.   | -12/17 greeting, - of which one in comb. with explicit thanking strategies.<br>-3/17 explicit thanking strategy only.  |
| <b>3. 'Birthday present'</b> | combining strategies, expressing emotions and appreciation   | -20/20 explicit thanking strategy.<br>- 2/20 appreciation of the object.<br>-3/20 used a vocative as appreciation of the addressee            | -16/17 intensified explicit thanks<br>- 7/17 in comb. with expressing emotions.<br>-13/17 expressed appreciation of the object                           | -6/17 intensified explicit thanking strategies<br>-15/17 explicit thanks<br>-10/17 in comb. with appreciation of the object.<br>-2/17 expressed lack of necessity              |
| <b>4. 'Raise'</b>            | explicit thanking strategy. Sometimes combined with expressing pleasure. Expressing emotions, generally avoided                    | -14/20 explicit thanking strategy.<br>-5/20 opted out.<br>-No expressions of emotion.<br>-Favoured short responses                            | -favoured long responses and combinations of strategies.<br>-10/17 expressed emotions, e.g. pleasure and/or uncertainty                                  | -favoured long responses and combinations of strategies.<br>-10/17 expressed emotions, e.g. uncertainty  |
| <b>5. 'Supermarket'</b>      | phatic, routinised expressions of gratitude, some chose to opt out   | -10/20 opted out.<br>-The remaining 10: explicit thanking strategies  |  | -15/17 greeting, -5 of which in comb. with explicit thanking strategies  |
| <b>6. 'Face'</b>             | quick <i>thanks</i> followed by a question of confirmation. Sometimes a joke   | -10/20 opted out.<br>-8/20 explicit thanking strategies<br>-Jokes occurred as well  | 8/17 explicit thanking strategies, often followed by a specification or appr. of the act<br>-2/17 opted out  | -12/17 explicit thanking strategies<br>-6 /17 specified what they were thanking for/ appr. of the act<br>-2/17 opted out   |
| <b>7. '\$500 loan'</b>       | long expressions of gratitude, e.g. explicit thanking strategies combined with appreciation, promise to repay or expressing relief | -8/20 explicit thanks in comb. with appreciation.<br>-4/20 expressed a promise to repay or indebtedness.<br>-20/20 explicit thanking strategy | -12/17 expr. indebtedness, some in combination with an assurance of repayment or repeated their indebtedness.<br>-8/17 intensified thanks + epr. of debt | -14 /17 expr. indebtedness, a promise to repay or both<br>- 8 of which in comb. with explicit thanking strategies.<br>-3/17 expr. appreciation of the addressee<br>-3/17 expr. |

|                             |   |  |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---|
|                             |   |  | -9/17 expr. appreciation of the addressee   | appreciation of the act   |
| <b>8. 'Married'</b>         | expression of thanks followed by a compliment or an expression of affection | -15/20 explicit thanking strategy,<br>- 9 of which followed or preceded by a compliment/<br>expression of appreciation.<br>-2/20 apologised,<br>-1/20 expressed lack of necessity<br>-1/20 expressed intention | -12/17 expressed a form of indebtedness, promise to repay, apology or intention.<br>-5/20 mainly expressed appreciation of the addressee    | -12/17 expressed a form of indebtedness, promise to repay, apology or intention.<br>-5/20 expressed appreciation of the addressee, often combined with explicit thanking strategies |
| <b>9. 'Lunch'</b>           | expression of thanks frequently followed by an offer to reciprocate         | -6/20 explicit thanking strategy only,<br>-4/20 explicit thanks followed by a vocative<br>-3/20 expressed debt.<br>-3/20 expressed appreciation of the object<br>-4/20 opted out                               | -16/17 explicit thanking strategies<br>-of which 10 explicit thanking strategies<br>-12/17 expr. debt and/or a desire to do it again        | -11/17 expressed appreciation of the act and/or the lunch<br>-15/17 expressed debt/or a desire to do it again   |
| <b>10. 'Farewell party'</b> | expressing emotion in addition to gratitude/ appreciation                   | -1/20 expressed emotions<br>-2/20 expressed lack of necessity/obligation.<br>-6/20 expressed appreciation of the act or the addressee<br>-4/20 chose to opt out.<br>-7/20 explicit thanking strategy           | -9/17 expressed emotions, commonly surprise or pleasure.<br>-14/17 expressed appreciation<br>-2/17 expressed lack of necessity / obligation | -9/17 expressed emotions.<br>-10/17 expr. appreciation<br>-8/17 expressed lack of necessity / obligation  |
| <b>11. 'Hairstyle'</b>      | explicit thanks followed by a redundant question or expression of pleasure  | -19/20 explicit thanking strategies<br>- 5 in comb. with a vocative<br>-1/20 expressed uncertainty as well as explicit thanks,<br>-1/20 expressed his/her opinion only   | - favoured short responses<br>-17/17 explicit thanking strategies, some of which were followed by an expression of the speakers' opinions   | -generally long responses / combination of strategies<br>-16/17 explicit thanking strategies -7/17 expr. Their own opinion of the new hairstyle                                     |
| <b>12. 'Newspaper'</b>      | phatic, ritualistic explicit thanks   | -20/20 explicit thanking strategies, 2 of which included a vocative  | -17/17 explicit thanking strategies -4 used a combination of two strategies, intensification or   | -17/17 explicit thanking strategies   |

|                           |   |   | repetition (as intensification)  |  |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>13. 'Parking'</b>      | phatic ritualistic explicit thanks  | -14/20 opted out.<br>- 5/20 explicit thanking strategies  |  | -6/17 left the hearer the opportunity to accept the favour e.g. by using a phrase such as 'here you are'.<br>-6/17 explicit thanking strategies<br>-3/17 opted out<br>- 1/17 greeting<br>-1/17 appreciation of the act |
| <b>14. 'Dinner party'</b> | expression of thanks, an expression of pleasure and a desire to continue the relationship | -20/20 explicit thanking strategies -<br>7/20 expr. appreciation of the object/act<br>-9/20 specified what they were thanking for | -15/17 explicit thanking strategies<br>-12/17 specified what they were thanking for<br>-7/17 expressed desire to continue the relationship | -16/17 explicit thanking strategies<br>-9/17 expr. appreciation<br>-7/17 expr. desire to continue the relationship<br>-6/17 expr. what they were thanking for  |

According to Gadamer's theory on "Vorverstandnis", major or minor cultural differences have an influence on the learning of a second language (Gadamer 1960, cited in Svanes 1991:44). Thus similarities in culture could lead to similar ways of expressing certain speech acts. Based on Gadamer's theory, Svanes states that to have "Vorverstandnis" (a 'preunderstanding') of the Norwegian culture is easier for Europeans and Americans with whom Norwegians share many aspects of their culture (Svanes 1991:44). The responses given by all the participants are similar in several situations. This would indicate that if the Norwegian participants would transfer sociopragmatic features or perhaps also pragmalinguistic features, the transfer would be positive in nature. However, there are situations in which the general way of responding in Norwegian deviates from that of the British and American participants, in which such transfer would be negative. Thus as Gadamer assumed, even minor cultural differences may have an effect on language learning and, in my opinion, also language production.

As the responses in the DCT show, Norwegian and British participants often favour different strategies when expressing gratitude in the same situations.

In the ‘newspaper’ situation, generally all participants chose an explicit thanking strategy. The responses given by the native speakers of Norwegian were almost identical to those of native speakers of English, thus the risk of negative transfer was very small. The learners of English chose explicit thanks, but whether this can be seen as positive transfer from their native language or adjusting to the norms of the second language is difficult to say.

In the ‘lunch’ situation, the Norwegian participants, irrespective of the language they were speaking in, generally chose to express explicit thanks, debt or an offer to reciprocate and appreciation of the object or the addressee. The responses were similar to those of the native speakers of English and the Norwegians expressing themselves in English seemed to choose among the set of strategies used by the native speakers of English. Thus transfer in this situation would be positive in nature. The participants, who had studied abroad and responded to this situation in English, chose the same strategies as were chosen by the participants who had not studied abroad.

The situation involving the \$5,00 loan elicited somewhat similar responses from the native speakers of Norwegian and native speakers of English. As Eisenstein and Bodman report, this situation elicited short expressions of gratitude, sometimes followed by a promise to repay. This was also the general strategy chosen in the Norwegian data, although the expressing of indebtedness seemed more central in the Norwegian data than in Eisenstein and Bodman’s findings. Furthermore, the Norwegians generally preferred an intensified thanking strategy, as opposed to a quick *thanks* as the American and British participants. In the data provided by the British participants, however, expressions of indebtedness did not occur at all. The responses given by the native speakers of Norwegian in English are similar to the way Eisenstein and Bodman describe the American responses and thus, this would indicate positive transfer. Several of the Norwegian participants who had studied abroad used the same strategies as illustrated in the material from the native speakers of English. The participants had studied in the US, UK and Australia for periods stretching from 1 to 4 years. These participants mainly

expressed thanks and appreciation, but not indebtedness, which seems to be more central in the Norwegian data.

Correspondingly, the ‘birthday present’ situation extracted similar responses by native speakers in both English and Norwegian. The Norwegian participants tended to express appreciation of the gift itself, something which also occurred in the native English data. As Eisenstein and Bodman report, the Americans tended to express emotions and this was also typical of the Norwegians responding in Norwegian. With regards to expressing emotions, there is limited risk for negative transfer in this situation. However, none of the native speakers of English who participated in my study expressed lack of necessity and/or obligation. This type of response occurred in the responses given by the native speakers of Norwegian, both in Norwegian and English, thus this would be a potential source of negative transfer.

Røkaas (2000) has observed that Norwegians tend to direct their attention to an act, a speech act or an object, instead of using first names, etc. as relationship-reinforcers. This may contribute to explain why almost all of the Norwegian participants expressed appreciation of the act of giving or the present itself. According to Røkaas (2000:122), Americans tend to personalise their messages more, however, the examples included in Eisenstein and Bodman’s article with regards to this situation show that Americans as well complimented the object. The examples included by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) show that the respondents complimented the object just as frequently as the person. Five of the six Norwegian participants who had studied abroad also expressed appreciation of the object. One of the Norwegian participants used a vocative, i.e. a form of personalising the message, in this situation. It is interesting to note that this particular participant had lived in the US for four years. Bou Franch identifies length of stay in the L2 community as one of the factors that have been used to explain transferability constraints (Bou Franch 1998:6). She refers to Kasper (1992, cited in Bou Franch 1998:6) who argues that “extended residence in the target community does not in and of itself make ‘negative’ pragmatic transfer go away”, however, studies has shown that a stay in the L2 community may influence the speaker’s communicative competence, e.g. Schmidt 1983.

Some of the responses to the situations were similar in some, but not all respects. The strategies chosen in the ‘dinner party’ situation were similar in Norwegian and

English, as illustrated in table 4. However, as I suggested in section 4.1.14, the motivation for expressing a desire to reciprocate may be different in American, and perhaps also British, and Norwegian, thus it may be relevant to talk about transfer here as well. Transfer of pragmalinguistic practices may be positive in this situation, due to the similarities regarding which strategies that are being used. However, the reasons for choosing such strategies, or the implications they entail may be examples of negative transfer. In my opinion, the Norwegian speakers may have offered to reciprocate with an intention to actually follow it up, while, as Røkaas (2000:118) states, the Americans may have considered it merely as polite small-talk.

In the ‘dinner party’ situation, both American and British English speakers chose to specify what they were thanking for, which is also very common in Norwegian. Norwegian has a number of routinised *takk for ...* expressions (*thanks for ...*), some of which occurred in the Norwegian data. Thus, one might expect that Norwegians expressing themselves in English would favour a similar expression in English as well, however, this was not the case. Some participants chose to use a corresponding expression e.g. *thanks for inviting me*, *thanks for having me*, but the majority chose other solutions. This may be because the participants were aware of the dangers of simply transferring the *takk for* expressions from Norwegians into English, which has been found somewhat peculiar and amusing by foreigners. Fretheim illustrates some of these routinised Norwegian ways of thanking:

There is one thing, though, at which Norwegians are good. They thank profusely and acknowledge their obligation even in situations which, in other cultures, would hardly call for a display of gratitude or where thanking would sound odd, have a humorous effect or even sound sarcastic. Typical Norwegian examples are ‘Thanks for now’, ‘Thanks for today’ or ‘Thanks for the company’ upon parting, followed by something which is literally ‘Thanks in equal fashion’ from the interlocutor. What is literally ‘Thanks for yesterday and ‘Thanks for last time’ are used as greetings upon your first encounter with the addressee after the event that took place the previous day or last time you met. ‘A thousand thanks for the food’ is the right thing to say to the host(ess) after a meal. The most curious one, however, is probably ‘Thanks for me’, said to your host(ess) when the party is over. (Fretheim 2005:146)

Røkaas also shares a description of a situation in which a foreigner was introduced to these expressions: “As her Norwegian informant explained the phrase *takk for meg* –

*thanks for me*, his Zimbabwean guest became more and more amused at the thought of Norwegians going around thanking others for themselves, and soon the entire table was laughing uproariously at the thought” (Røkaas 2000:120-121). Thus Norwegians who are familiar with the risk of being misunderstood when using a *thanks for* expression, may favour other options. Interestingly, all but one of the participants who had studied abroad in an English-speaking country chose to specify what they were thanking for. It is impossible to determine each participant’s motivation for their choice and there may be several reasons for their choosing this option, but perhaps the participants who have lived in an English-speaking community feel more confident and know how to use *thanks for* expressions appropriately in English.

Røkaas argues that Norwegians generally take to verbal routines in social leave-taking situations, as opposed to Americans who use ad-hoc formulations (Røkaas 2000:123). She also argues that the Norwegians’ expressions in such situations are more object-related and impersonal, rather than personal, i.e. *takk for i kveld* (*Thanks for this evening*) compared to *this was such a fun way to spend the evening. I’m glad we could all be together and I hope we can do it again soon. Goodnight everyone and take care* (Røkaas 2000:122). As a native speaker of Norwegian, I recognise myself in her description and I know that I frequently use standardised expressions such as *takk for i kveld*, but I am reluctant to accept the argument that Norwegians always use these strategies and that their messages are generally impersonalised. The responses in English and Norwegian by the Norwegian participants tended to be rather long and elaborate and hardly any chose these routinised expressions only. The Norwegian participants may have chosen not to use a routinised expression such as the *takk for* expressions, due to the size of imposition in this situation. As Røkaas points out, Norwegians consider being invited into someone’s home a significant step in the friendship. “It has been said that Americans will invite you to dinner at their homes in order to get to know you better. Norwegians wait to invite you until they know you very well. Crossing the threshold into a Norwegian home is an important indicator of your standing with the Norwegian” (Røkaas 2000:118). Thus they may have considered the size of imposition so large that a routinised phrase would not be sufficient.



The 'face' situation is similar to the 'dinner party' situation in that the responses made by the native speakers of Norwegian and English were similar in many ways, but not all. Strategies such as explicit thanks and questions of confirmation occurred both in the English and the Norwegian material. There was, however, one type of response which occurred in the Norwegian material only. As illustrated in the 'dinner party' situation, the Norwegians responding in Norwegian commonly specified what they were thanking for. Unlike the responses given by Norwegians responding in English in the 'dinner party' situation, as many as 6 of the 17 who expressed themselves in English also chose to specify what they were thanking for and thus this may indicate negative transfer of this one aspect. In this situation as well, several of the participants who had studied abroad chose to specify what they were thanking for. Another indication of transfer and not adjusting to native speaker way of expressing oneself is the fact that eleven of the participants from the British control group chose to opt out, while only two of the Norwegian participants responding in English chose this option.

When the native speakers of British English did not choose to opt out in the 'hairstyle' situation, the strategies chosen by native speakers of English and Norwegian were similar. Thus one might expect the responses given by Norwegians in English to be similar to those of the native speakers of English. Aijmer and Olsson argue that thank you is obligatory in certain settings, e.g. when given a compliment (Aijmer & Olsson 1990:85). This may explain the fact that an explicit thanking strategy was chosen by several of the British participants. The results illustrate that the learners of English chose the same types of strategies. However, they tended to combine more strategies, which lead to their responses being generally longer than those of native speakers of Norwegian. This was also true for the participant in this group who had studied abroad.

Based on the examples given in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 article, the responses provided by native speakers of Norwegian appeared to be more similar to the American responses in length than those of native speakers of Norwegian (or British English). In that way, it seems like the Norwegian participants had adopted a way of responding which was similar to that of the responses by Americans as indicated in Eisenstein and Bodman (1986). Interestingly, the responses given by Norwegians in English were generally longer than both the Norwegian responses and the native-English

responses. Typically, the responses given by learners are similar either to strategies from their L1 or to strategies from the target language. However, in this situation we might see an indication of a sort of 'pragmatic interlanguage'. Ellis argues that the learner's grammar is transitional. "Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system. This results in an interlanguage continuum. That is, learners construct a series of mental grammars or interlanguages as they gradually increase their complexity of their L2 knowledge" (Ellis 1997:33, emphasis removed). Perhaps this may be the case with pragmatic competence as well, i.e. that the learners adopt the same strategies as the native speakers, but do not avoid using the strategies used in their L1 and thus, their interpragmatic utterance becomes a combination of L1 and L2 strategies.

Other studies comparing native speakers' speech act production with non-native speakers' speech act production have displayed similar results. In their investigation of requests made by native speakers and non-native speakers of English at the University of Pennsylvania, Billmyer and Varghese (2000:539) report that in several situations, non-native speakers of English produced longer utterances compared to native speakers. Similarly, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) report that non-native speakers' utterances tended to exceed native speakers' utterances when they were at an intermediate level of proficiency. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain explain their findings by arguing that the learners have not yet reached the same level of verbal efficiency as the native speakers and thus use more supportive moves than the native speakers.

In the situation involving the farewell party, the responses given by native speakers of Norwegians included strategies which occurred in both the British and the American data. The American responses frequently involved expressing emotions, while among the British participants, only one explicitly expressed emotion. In the British material, as opposed to in the American material, expressions of lack of necessity and/or obligation occurred, however, only once. Both groups of native speakers of English expressed appreciation as well. The Norwegians expressing themselves in English tended to use the same strategies as the Norwegians expressing themselves in Norwegian and thus this situation illustrates a case of positive transfer. However, it is important to note that quite a few of the Norwegian participants expressing themselves in English chose to

express lack of necessity and/or obligation, including the participant who had lived one year in the US. According to Røkaas (2000:123), Americans frequently express emotions, while Norwegians are generally more reserved. However, in this situation the Norwegian participants expressed emotions in both Norwegian and English. Røkaas also argue that Norwegians disclose themselves to their intimates and since the interlocutor is described as being a friend in the situation, the respondents may have considered him/her as a part of their intimate circle.

The British participants, however, did not give equally emotional responses. As mentioned in the presentation of the results this may have something to do with the location of the conversation. Karin Aijmer lists setting as a decisive factor when it comes to the production of utterances and thus the British participants may have felt that expressing emotions may be unsuitable in the workplace (Aijmer 1996:67).

Several of the situations in the DCT illustrated situations in which there was a possibility of negative transfer occurring. In the 'bus' situation, there were several similarities between the preferred choice of strategies in Norwegian compared to those of the American and British respondents. The preferred strategy among the British and American participants was an explicit expression of gratitude. Eisenstein and Bodman also report that some of the American chose to opt out. As can be seen from the overview in table 4 above, both opting out and expressing an explicit thanks occurred in the Norwegian data, however, several chose to use another speech act instead, i.e. greeting. It might be expected that the Norwegians expressing themselves in English would prefer opting out or using an explicit thanking strategy, due to the fact that those options appeared in the data from the native speakers of Norwegian as well as native speakers of English. However, the preferred strategy was in fact a greeting, which indicates negative transfer. The participant in this group who had studied one year in the US also chose a greeting. It is difficult to say whether transfer in this situation would lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings. In my opinion, that would be rather doubtful. However, the choice not to express gratitude by Norwegian learners of English in a situation where native speakers of English would express thanks may cause a negative impression.

In the situation regarding the cashier putting the speaker's groceries into a bag, it is impossible to talk about transfer due to the fact that this situation was not included in

the Norwegian version of the questionnaire. As discussed earlier, this is, as far as I know, not a common practice in Norway and thus I feared that the size of imposition, as intended by Eisenstein and Bodman, would be perceived as greater by the Norwegian participants than by the native speakers of English and thus compromise the results. However, if this is a common practice abroad, the Norwegian learners of English should know how to express themselves in this situation. The responses show that the way the Norwegians expressed themselves differs from that of the British and American participants. While the British and the American participants chose an explicit thanking strategy or to opt out, the Norwegians chose a greeting, in five cases in combination with an explicit thanking strategy. The participants in who had lived abroad who responded to this situation chose a greeting. The participants' responses diverged from those of the native speakers of English, something which, in the worst case scenario, could contribute to form an opinion of Norwegians as ungrateful or impolite.

As with the supermarket situation, the 'parking' situation was not included in the Norwegian version of the questionnaire, thus it is impossible to speak of transfer. However, the responses given by the Norwegian participants diverged from those of the native speakers of English. There were generally on two responses in the material provided by native speakers of English, either explicit thanks or no response at all, i.e. opting out. Some of the Norwegians chose either of these two strategies, but several also chose to leave the hearer the option to accept the favour by using a thanking responder corresponding to the Norwegian *vær så god*, including the participant who had studied abroad. Thus such responses may indicate some influence of L1 practices on the learners' responses.

If we compare situations 2, where the bus driver lets the speaker out of the front door, 5, where the cashier puts the speaker's groceries in the bag, and 13, where the attendant drives the speaker's car up from the parking garage, we see similar, but not identical, results. The results are similar in that they all elicited short responses or no response at all. It is interesting to see that in all of these situations, several of the native speakers of Norwegian chose to perform another speech act than the one that was intended, i.e. thanking. As reported, several chose a greeting instead, as opposed to the native speakers of British English who chose a thanking strategy, when not opting out.

One of the explanations for this may be that the explicit thanking formulas, such as *thanks* and *thank you*, may have different functions. Eisenstein and Bodman have excluded situations where *thanks* and *thank you* etc. had a different function, however, *thanks* and *thank you* may be interpreted as having a double function in these situations. The items 2, 5 and 13 describe situations in which there would be natural for the interlocutors to go their separate ways after a dialogue, e.g. when you have paid for your groceries, you leave the shop etc. and thanking can then serve as a closing signal in the same way as a greeting. Coulmas quote Hymes who states that “while in American English, it [*thank you*] is still mainly a formula for the expression of gratitude, British ‘thank you’ seems on its way to marking formally the segments of certain interactions” (Hymes 1971, cited in Coulmas 1981:81). Aijmer states that thanking in telephone conversations may function as a marker signalling “that the conversational partners want to terminate the conversation” (Aijmer 1996:54). However, Aijmer also note that it may be natural for the interlocutors to exchange farewells after thanking (1996:54). Subsequently it is possible that the native speakers of British English combine thanking for a service with thanking as a closing signal, while native speakers of Norwegian responding in Norwegian and English settle for an explicit closing signal only.

Another explanation as to why some participants refrained from using a thanking strategy or chose to opt out may be that they considered the size of imposition to be too small. Some of the participants in Eisenstein and Bodman’s study said that they would not express gratitude if the hearer did the beneficent deed in a routine manner as a part of their job (1986:171), i.e. +RO. Alternatively, the choice to opt out among the Norwegian participants may be explained by the tendency of Norwegians not to communicate with strangers, i.e. in situations where the social distance is great, (+D). Røkaas states that this is one of the differences between the communicative behaviour of Norwegians and Americans. Røkaas refers to Carbaugh’s 1998 study of Finnish and American communicative norms. Carbaugh suggests a possible explanation for the American openness towards strangers, according to Røkaas “he argues that acknowledging the existence of others is an important cultural value in America, and that this openness can be seen as ‘the verbal disclosure of a common experience in a nation characterized by diversity’” (Carbaugh 1998, cited in Røkaas 2000:118). Norwegians, however, reserve

self-disclosure to their intimates. To speak to strangers in Norway may be considered impolite in that the speaker threatens the hearer's negative face, i.e. the hearer's right not to be imposed on. (See Brown & Levinson 1988:61, Gray 2005:57.) One might have expected that the Norwegian participants would have transferred this tendency into English, but as can be seen from the results, hardly any of the Norwegians who responded in English chose to opt out in any of the situations 2, 5 or 13. Perhaps Norwegians are aware of the differences between Norwegian culture and other cultures when it comes to small talk with strangers. Røkaas states that many of her Norwegian informants indicated that "the lack of social interaction between strangers in Norway is one of the characteristics they feel least comfortable with in their own culture" (Røkaas 2000:118).

The responses given by native speakers in the '\$500 loan' situation also diverged to some extent from those of native speakers of English. All participants expressed long expressions of gratitude and several chose to express appreciation of the addressee. As illustrated above, four of the British participants expressed a promise to repay or indicated that they were indebted to the hearer. This was by far the preferred strategy in the Norwegian material as well, including the responses from the participants who had studied abroad. Almost all of the Norwegians expressing themselves in Norwegian as well as the Norwegians expressing themselves in English expressed indebtedness. Some even repeated their acknowledgement of debt to emphasize this. The strategies used by the Norwegians who expressed themselves in English all occurred in the material provided by the native speakers of English as well. However, I would still argue that it is sensible to talk about transfer in this situation, because the participants expressing themselves in English tended to choose the exact same strategies as the native speakers Norwegian. The question, in my opinion, is whether this transfer is negative or positive. In this situation where the responses given by native speakers of Norwegian and native speakers of English are similar, we could argue that the transfer is positive. However, expressing debt, when it occurred in the British English material, occurred in combination with an explicit thanking strategy. This was not always the case in Norwegian. Thus this may be regarded as negative transfer.

In the situations involving money, the Norwegian participants, whether expressing themselves in English or in Norwegian, were very concerned with evening out the score.

Expressing indebtedness, an offer to repay or lack of obligation or necessity were central in these situations, irrespective of the size of imposition, i.e. amount of money, etc. The results in situation 1, for instance, show that the Norwegian participants preferred to express indebtedness or a promise to repay both in Norwegian and English, while the native speakers of English more frequently preferred a thanking strategy. This situation shows a tendency of the Norwegian respondents to choose the same strategies in English as in Norwegian which again may indicate sociopragmatic transfer.

The same may be said for the eighth situation ('married'). The majority of strategies preferred by the Norwegian participants occurred in the data from the English-speaking participants, but the native speakers of English and the native speakers of Norwegian generally preferred different strategies. An apology, instead of an expression of gratitude, occurred only two times in my material from native speakers of English, however, apologies expressing indebtedness and/or intention were the strategies chosen by almost all of the Norwegian participants. Interestingly, the participant who responded to this situation in English and who had studied abroad did not express indebtedness or a promise to repay, but rather gratitude and appreciation of the addressee, which generally were preferred strategies among the British participants. I argue that the term transfer is applicable here as well, even negative transfer. One of the strategies which did not appear in the native speakers of English data, but which occurred in the data provided by native speakers of Norwegian responding in Norwegian and English was the expression of indebtedness. This strategy is an example of negative transfer. Røkaas (2000) has investigated requests in Norwegian and in American English and found that in many situations Norwegians would choose to opt out and not make a request at all. She hypothesizes that Norwegians tend to avoid face-threatening situations if possible (Røkaas 2000:116). I would argue that the reason for the Norwegian participants to favour an apology in this situation is that they realise that they indirectly have imposed on another person and taken up another person's time and thus feel indebted to that person. As Røkaas points out, Norwegians tend to avoid imposing on other people (Røkaas 2000:123). I would also argue that several of the Norwegian participants who responded in English may have transferred this unwillingness to impose into their English and that the act done prior to the conversation may be considered more severe in Norway than

perhaps in the US or UK. The same pattern can be seen in situation 9, in which the speaker is invited and treated to lunch at an expensive restaurant by a friend. However, in this situation, native speakers of English, both American and British, expressed a wish to reciprocate more frequently than in the other situations. The role of social factor will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2.

The situation in which the responses made by native speakers of Norwegian varied the most was the 'raise' situation. The responses given by the Norwegian participants diverged greatly from the results reported by Eisenstein and Bodman and the responses from the British control group. While the native speakers of English chose short, explicit and reserved expressions of gratitude perhaps do to, as Eisenstein and Bodman indicate, the wish not to seem undeserving of the raise, the Norwegians preferred long and emotive expressions of gratitude, which frequently involved the expression of uncertainty. The responses in this situation indicate that the Norwegian participants relied heavily on their L1 pragmatic competence and that they preferred to transfer their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic strategies from Norwegian into English. Svanes states that most speakers will be influenced by their own culture's attitude to authorities when communicating with a person of higher authority (Svanes 1991:50). This is evident in my material where there are obvious examples of sociopragmatic transfer between Norwegian and English in this situation. Generally, the responses deviated greatly from those of native speakers of English, especially British English. However, as pointed out in the presentation of the results, two participants chose to express deference by using the vocative *Sir* when responding in English, which according to Røkaas has together with other honorific terms completely disappeared in Norwegian, but is still common in America. Røkaas argue that American generally use names and titles as attention-getters and relationship-reinforcers (Røkaas 2000:119). Notably, one of the participants who used *sir* had lived in the US for four years, compare section 4.1.4.

In addition to state whether they had lived and/or studied abroad in the first part of the questionnaire, the Norwegian participants were asked to state how often they hear, speak, read and write English to see whether other types of input than their English education would have an effect on their sociopragmatic performance. I measured the



Norwegian participants' responses which were similar to those of the native speakers of English up to the participants' judgement of how often they used English outside their studies. The results indicate that there is no direct connection between the participants' perception of how often they use English outside their studies and their sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic performance. Several of the participants who produced native-like responses in one or more situations, stated that they spoke English only now and then. Several of them, however, stated that they heard English on an everyday basis. Similarly, several of the participants who showed a tendency of sociopragmatic and/or pragmalinguistic transfer, also stated that they heard English on an everyday basis. Thus there are difficulties establishing a pattern here.

Regarding the results overall, there are many similarities in the use of strategies expressing gratitude used by native speakers of English and native speakers of Norwegian, something which may lead to positive pragmatic transfer and thus reduce the risk of misunderstandings or negative impressions. However, the results of my investigation indicate that Norwegian learners of English rely heavily on their L1 pragmatic competence and that this leads to negative transfer in the situations in which English and Norwegian practices diverge. The responses made by the participants who reported that they had lived and/or studied in an English-speaking country were in many situations similar to those of native speakers of English. Thus Bou-Franch's (1998) observation that a stay in the L2 community affect sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer is supported by my material, but as Kasper (1992) points out, a stay in the L2 community does not necessary make negative pragmatic transfer go away. It is difficult to establish any particular reasons for why the participants prefer to use the same strategies in Norwegian and English other than that they may assume universality or that their pragmatic competence does not correspond to their grammatical competence. The participants may assume that the way one express gratitude is more or less universal and that by being familiar with the English strategies corresponding to the Norwegian strategies used when expressing gratitude is sufficient to communicate successfully. Hassal (1997 in Kasper 2001:511) points out that adult learners frequently rely on their L1 competence or universal knowledge when producing utterances in a second language. It is difficult to know whether this would cause communicative failure across cultures in

these situations. An investigation into native speakers' reaction to the thanking strategies is needed in order to know how well (or how badly) they work.

## ***5.2 Potential differences in politeness systems***

In addition to the tendency of Norwegian learners to rely on their L1 strategies, the results of my study indicate that differences in choice of thanking strategies between native speakers of English and native speakers of Norwegian are related to the way they view the situational factors in the situations. The responses given in the DCT show that variables such as size of imposition, setting, relationship between the interlocutors, etc. affect the form of the gratitude expression. In the situations where the participants judged the size of imposition to be small, –S, the participants, independent of nationality, generally chose short expressions of gratitude or no expression at all. This coincides with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory where the choice whether to perform a face threatening act, such as thanking, or not, varies according to the estimated risk of face loss and that the greater the risk, the more indirect realisation of the speech act (Brown & Levinson 1988:60). However, the responses indicated that the responders judged the social factors differently and considered the hearer's aspects of face differently.

I attempted to classify certain variables in the situations by using terminology from Brown and Levinson (1988), first introduced in the 1970s, complemented by the fourth category introduced by Thomas (1995) to illustrate some of the influential factors more clearly and to open for comparison of certain situations. Thomas' category is abbreviated RO, and +RO means that the speaker has a certain right and that the hearer has certain obligations to the speaker. I must emphasise that it is important to regard these categories, –S<sup>3</sup>, +S, –P, +P, –D, +D, +RO, –RO, as endpoints of a set of continuums. The size of imposition can be classified as 'great', +S, in one situation, but may be 'greater' in another situation. If we compare situations 1 '\$5,00', 3 'birthday present' and 7 '\$500 loan', we can argue that the size of imposition in situation 1 is small, i.e. –S. The imposition in situation 3 is greater and thus I have classified it as being +S. Furthermore,

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<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to adopt Thomas' (1995) term *size of imposition* rather than Brown and Levinson's (1988) *rate of imposition*.

if we compare situation 3 with 7, I would argue that the size of imposition in 7 is slightly greater than that in 3, but both of them I have classified as +S. This was also commented on by Brown and Levinson (1988:80). They argue that the social factors are independent variables. I would also argue that the continuums are culturally relative.

**Table 5 Social factors**

| <b>Variables/<br/>Situation number</b>  | <b>Power</b> | <b>Distance</b> | <b>Weight of<br/>imposition</b> | <b>Rights and<br/>obligations</b> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1 (\$5,00 loan),<br/>6 ('face'),<br/>11 ('hairstyle',<br/>12 ('newspaper')</b>   | <b>- P</b>   | <b>- D</b>      | <b>- S</b>                      | <b>- RO</b>                       |
| <b>2 ('bus'),<br/>5 ('supermarket'),<br/>13 ('parking)</b>  | <b>- P</b>   | <b>+ D</b>      | <b>- S</b>                      | <b>+RO</b>                        |
| <b>3 ('birthday<br/>present'),<br/>7 (\$500 loan),<br/>8 ('married'),<br/>9 ('lunch'),<br/>10 ('farewell<br/>party'),<br/>14 ('dinner<br/>party')</b> | <b>- P</b>   | <b>- D</b>      | <b>+ S</b>                      | <b>-RO</b>                        |
| <b>4 ('raise')</b>  | <b>+ P</b>   | <b>+ D</b>      | <b>+ S</b>                      | <b>-RO</b>                        |

As I pointed out above, the results indicated that the respondents judged the social factors differently in the different situations. In the data, there was also an indication that the respondents chose their strategies according to a hierarchy of social factors, i.e. that in one situation they considered the distance in power to be more significant than the size of imposition, although they considered the size of imposition to be great as well. I am aware that the terminology I have chosen to describe the social factors does not capture these nuances, however, despite these limitations, I still find the classification useful with respect to giving an overview of certain important variables in the situations and comparing impositions of varying sizes.

As I indicated above, the responses indicated that in some situations, the participants viewed the social factors differently. These situations were the ones which involved the highest risk of negative transfer. In the following section, I will mainly discuss two of the situations from the DCT, which in my opinion are the clearest

examples of how these social factors are culturally relative, namely the 'raise' and the 'married' situation.

The only situation in which the power relations, the distance and the size of imposition were great was situation 4, in which the speaker is called into the vice president of personnel's office and is informed that he/she is given a raise. This situation gave the most striking differences in responses. While the British respondents gave short responses, the Norwegian participants gave long emotional responses. Wierzbicka has compared features of Polish culture and English culture and argue that English is fond of understatements. She goes on to point out that "the English understatement applies to spontaneous opinions and feelings, not to opinions or feelings which are presumed to be shared" (Wierzbicka 1991:45). Røkaas argues that Norwegians are reserved when it comes to expressing emotions and that they disclose themselves only with intimates, unlike Americans who disclose themselves with strangers as well (Røkaas 2000:123). According to Røkaas, Americans tend to be more affective when it comes to showing emotions than Norwegians. Røkaas has found that when Americans ask someone for a favour, they tend to reveal the reasons for asking, personal emotions, etc. while Norwegians generally do not (Røkaas 2000:115-116). Surprisingly, this theory was not supported in my material. The British participants as well as the American participants gave short responses or some even chose to opt out. Eisenstein and Bodman note that "while greater emotion sometimes provoked longer speech act sets, this did not occur when there was considerable social distance between interlocutors. Item 4 (a vice president of personnel offers a relatively new employee a raise) elicited surprisingly brief expressions of gratitude" (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:67). Contrastively, the Norwegian participants gave the most emotional and the longest responses. Furthermore, strategies which did not appear elsewhere in my data, occurred in this situation, i.e. Aijmer's category F, stressing one's gratitude, which is characterised as an emotional explicit thanking strategy.

One of the aspects of the responses may be explained by referring to a valued feature of Norwegian culture. Some of the respondents expressed surprise, both in English and Norwegian, and that they were uncertain whether they had deserved it or not. Røkaas states that this type of verbal humility, as exemplified here, tends to be valued in

Norway (Røkaas 2000:113). Humorously or not, many Norwegians would perhaps also refer to the Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose's text 'Janteloven' from the book *En flyktning krysser sitt spor* as a part of the Norwegian image of the self, which in general terms states that you are not supposed to think highly of yourself in any way and thus express surprise or even minimizing or question your own effort. The expressions of surprise may also be connected to the fact that in certain trades, raises are commonly given collectively to all employees. This, however, varies according to individual practices within companies in the private and public sector, trade unions' arrangements with the unions of the employers, etc.

Eisenstein and Bodman report that the responses given in this situation did not differ that much from the responses given in the friendlier situations among the American participants, but that there were less complimenting and expression of surprise. This was not the case with the Norwegian respondents, whether they responded in Norwegian or English. Gesteland states that "status in England [UK] is largely determined by one's regional origin, social class, family background and accent." i.e. Britain has a more vertical status system. He goes on to state that this differs from, amongst others, Nordic countries "where people are uncomfortable with obvious status differences" (Gesteland 2003:280). Thus they would perhaps try to even out the differences by expressing themselves more similarly as they would to one of equal status. The fact that social differences are not as important in Norwegian culture may indicate why the Norwegian participants expressed themselves the way they did. It might be that the Norwegian participants considered the size of imposition, the fact that they were given a raise based on their performance, to be more important than the difference in power between the vice president of personnel and themselves in this particular situation. They may have thought that not expressing and stressing their gratitude would be more face-threatening than complying with the "norms" of how you address people of higher power. The responses given by the British and American participants would then indicate that they considered bursting out their emotions in front of a person of higher power more face-threatening than express gratitude according to the size of the imposition, i.e. that they judged the difference in power to be more severe than the size of imposition.

The responses given in the 'married situation also illustrate that the participants may have judged the social factors differently. It seems that the Norwegian participants may have found the size of imposition in this situation greater than the native speakers of English. The responses given by native speakers of English were generally short expressions of gratitude or combinations of thanking strategies. Based on Wolfson's Bulge Theory (1989), Eisenstein and Bodman expected to find short responses in this situation (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:67). They state that Wolfson identified shortness in communications among intimates. This situation confirmed their suspicions, as opposed to the situations involving a gift and the loan of a large amount of money (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:67).

The responses given by the Norwegian participants were not in accordance with Wolfson's claims. Once again the many of the Norwegian participants chose to express debt or suggest ways of repayment both when expressing themselves in English and in Norwegian. Several also chose to apologise. Coulmas (1981:17) explains the close link between apologies and thanks thus: "the link between object of gratitude and object of regret is the concept of *indebtedness*. Thanks implying the indebtedness of the recipient of the benefit closely resemble apologies where the speaker actually recognizes his indebtedness to his interlocutor". He goes on to state that "while thanks and apologies may exist as generic types of activities across cultures, it is obvious that the pragmatic considerations of their implementation are culturally defined" (Coulmas 1981:32). Coulmas also state that to intrude upon someone is often considered as an object of regret and thus calls for an apology (Coulmas 1981:11). Based on the responses given by the Norwegian participants, it seems that they regard the act done prior to the situation described as intruding on the hearer. Coulmas (1981:18) offers an explanation for the occurrence of expressions of debt in connection with gratitude expressions by arguing that both apologies and thanking are related to indebtedness. Coulmas argues that whereas the speaker actually recognises his indebtedness when apologising, indebtedness is implied when expressing gratitude and that this indebtedness is explicitly stated on occasion (Coulmas 1981:17). Brown and Levinson describe apologising and thanking as face threatening acts threatening the speaker's face. They argue that while expressing thanks offends the speaker's negative face, apologising directly damage the speaker's

positive face (Brown & Levinson 1988:67-68). Thus we can assume that the Norwegian speakers judge the acts done prior to their utterances as being severe and therefore choose to directly damage their own faces to restore the balance. This may be related to the description Røkaas gives of Norwegians. She argues that not imposing and becoming a burden to others are highly valued in Norway. Furthermore, she argues that Norwegians fear to create imbalance in social exchange and that relationships of indebtedness are kept as short-term as possible (Røkaas 2000:117). This may explain why several of the Norwegian participants offered to reciprocate immediately, i.e. asked if there were anything more they could do, or offered to do a particular act immediately, e.g. doing the dishes. It is important to note that apologies occurred in the British material as well, but it was not the preferred strategy like it was in the material produced by Norwegian speakers.

In addition to valuing one social factor higher than another and considering the size of imposition more or less severe, there were other differences between the native speakers' behaviour which are important to point out. Based on the responses given in the DCT, there are some indications of differences with regards to what aspects of face which are paid most attention to. Brown and Levinson state that thanking offends the speaker's own negative face, because it shows that the speaker acknowledges that he/she is in debt to the other person, i.e. something is expected from him/her in return (Brown & Levinson 1988:67). However, if this was all there was to thanking, I would assume that people generally would try to avoid it and avoid threatening their own face. Brown and Levinson do not discuss thanking in detail, but in my opinion, thanking must also have the function of building up or saving the hearer's face somehow. Expressing gratitude always goes together with a previous or subsequent act, either verbal or non-verbal. Thus, if you do not thank the person who has done or offers to do a certain act, it seems like you take for granted that they should do what they have done or offers to do, that they have a duty to do it. If, in reality, they do not have such a duty, assuming so would be to impose on their negative face. Moreover, if someone has done something, and you do not thank them, you do not show appreciation of their deed, and this would threaten their positive face, their want of being appreciated by others.

As Brown and Levinson (1988:67) point out, thanking offends the speaker's own face and, as I pointed out above, it appeals to the hearer's positive face. However, there are different strategies one can use, i.e. measures one can take to express gratitude which appeal to different aspects of the hearer's face. In my data, there seemed to be some differences between the native speakers of English and Norwegian with regards to the use of strategies applying to negative or positive face. The overview in table 4 illustrates the main realisations preferred by the native speakers and this indicates that there were some differences in the use of positive and negative politeness strategies.

Generally, the native speakers of English, whether American or British, tended to use strategies applying to the hearer's positive face, while native speakers of Norwegian often also made use of strategies indirectly or directly applying to the hearer's negative face. The '\$5,00' loan and the '\$500' loan situations are two examples. If we compare the responses in these situations, we see that the Norwegian speakers frequently use expressions of indebtedness etc. in both situations, however, more in the latter than in the former. We can also note that the expressions of gratitude are generally longer in the situation where the size of imposition is greater and that the speakers tend to combine three or four strategies in the \$500 loan situation as compared to two in the \$5 loan situation. If we compare the English responses produced by Norwegians to the Norwegian responses, we see that the expression of debt is even more frequent in the English responses. The responses given by native speakers of British English showed that the expression of indebtedness and promise to repay were not that central in these two situations. Only two participants chose to express a promise to repay in the '\$5,00' situation, while seven participants chose to express some sort of reluctance to accept the money or a promise to repay in the '\$500' situation.

The high frequency of expressions of debt and promise to repay may be related to a set of central values in Norwegian culture. To manage on one's own without needing help from others is highly valued in Norwegian society and thus Norwegians strongly dislike inconveniencing other people (Røkaas 2000, cited in Gray 2005:55). Røkaas states that the unwillingness to ask for help may come from Norwegians' wish not to be in debt to anyone, morally or socially (Røkaas in Gray 2005:55). Gray is more sceptical to causal explanations such as the ones posed by Røkaas, but states that if we accept the claim that



Norwegians do not like to be indebted to anyone, this can be explained by arguing that being in debt to anyone threatens the speaker's negative face more in Norway than in other cultures (Gray 2005:55-56). Fife argues that self-reliance is highly valued in Norway and that children are taught this early on.

In Norwegian communication patterns in child rearing there is stress on self-reliance at the same time as on functioning well in society. ... To be 'selvstendig' also embodies the ability to be self-sufficient. To master self-reliance is important, and by the time our child is adult he or she is able to face the obligations in the environment and is ready for a society where egalitarian principles abound on an equal footing (Fife 2000:68).

Thus Norwegian speakers would avoid being indebted to someone.

Another example is the 'married' situation, where the native speakers of English chose mainly to express appreciation of the hearer or the act and the native speakers of Norwegian also chose to express indebtedness. As I suggested above, this may suggest that there are cultural differences which influence the way we speak. As I pointed out, the results indicate that the Norwegian participants seem to judge the size of imposition to be greater than the native speakers of English. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in this situation, as well as in the 'farewell party' situation, the native speakers of Norwegian, especially when responding in English, chose to express lack of necessity and/or obligation. Brown and Levinson mainly talk about requests where attending to the hearer's negative face would be to make it easier for the hearer to decline, not be obliged to comply with the request. This is, of course, different for thanking, where the act is already done – in a way it does not help to make the hearer less obliged to do it. It is interesting, though, to note that many of the Norwegians choose to emphasise just this: that the hearer did not have to have done what they did. That seems to be attending to the same sort of face as Brown and Levinson suggest is common with requests. In my view, this may be related to Røkaas' argument that not imposing and becoming a burden to others are highly valued in Norway and that Norwegians fear to create imbalance in social exchange (Røkaas 2000:117).

A third example, which in my opinion may indicate underlying differences in politeness systems, is the 'farewell party' situation. The responses given in this situation may be an indication of how severe social debt is regarded by Norwegians. Based on

empirical research on pragmalinguistic behaviour of Americans and Norwegian, Røkaas argue that when Norwegians utter a wish to meet their interlocutor, they really mean it, as opposed to Americans who do not necessarily see this as a binding appointment. “Social obligation is not taken lightly in Norway” (Røkaas 2000:118). Thus the perlocutionary effect may be different in the respective language cultures. This may be one of the reasons as to why the Norwegian participants use longer expressions of gratitude in the ‘farewell party’ situation. The speaker is in ‘social debt’ to the colleague and thus poses a threat to the speaker’s own negative face (Gray 2005:58). The speaker thus thanks profoundly to restore the balance. Doing a lot of things for someone probably threatens both your own negative face and the other person’s negative face. If the other person feels in debt, he might feel impended upon to do something in return. It might also be that not thanking someone would be to take for granted that you have the right to impose on them, and that it is therefore that more thanks are expected the less right the person has to expect something.

Finally, there is another aspect of Norwegian culture, which, in my opinion, comes across in the responses given by the Norwegian participants, that is the concept of *verbal humility*. As I pointed out above when discussing the ‘raise’ situation, *Janteloven* is by many regarded as worthy of imitation. This tendency was also somewhat illustrated in the ‘hairstyle’ situation. Even though the description of the situation said that the speaker was satisfied with his/her new hairstyle, several of the Norwegian participants expressed uncertainty or asked for confirmation, both in English and Norwegian. This may be related to what Røkaas refers to as *verbal humility*, which is valued in Norwegian (Røkaas 2000:113). Brown and Levinson state that accepting a compliment, as is being done in the ‘hairstyle’ situation, damages the speaker’s positive face. They argue that in a situation like this, the speaker may feel constrained to denigrate the object of the hearer’s compliment or perhaps feel constrained to compliment the hearer in return (Brown & Levinson 1988:68). Moreover, being given a compliment also applies to the person being given the compliment’s positive face. Thus, by complimenting the speaker, the hearer notices and attends to the speaker’s wants, which is the first of Brown and Levinson’s positive politeness strategies (1988:102), and by accepting the compliment the speaker damages his/her own positive face. However, accepting the compliment by thanking and

accepting it by expressing uncertainty are slightly different with regards to the speaker's face. By thanking, the speaker humbles his negative face, but by demeaning the importance of the hearer's statement through expressing uncertainty, the speaker damages his/her positive face.

### ***5.3 Do Norwegian EFL learners have sufficient pragmatic knowledge in English?***

Based on the analysis of the data and the comparison of the responses, it seems as if the Norwegian participants rely heavily on their L1 competence when expressing gratitude and the only reason reducing the risk of cross-cultural communicative failure is the similarity in thanking routines in Norwegian and English. As I discussed in section 2.2, grammatical knowledge has been regarded as one of the factors influencing pragmatic development, however, it has also been seen as independent of pragmatic competence. I argue that a certain proficiency and understanding of grammar is a prerequisite for pragmatic competence. In my opinion, my results support my argument in some respects. Eisenstein and Bodman report that the reasons for the non-native speakers' difficulties in giving appropriate responses in the different situations were not unfamiliarity with the situations alone, but the complexity of the language required and syntax etc. (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:174). They state that extensive syntactic and lexical problems occurred in the responses from all the non-native participants (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:175). The Norwegian participants who participated in my study were learners of English at an advanced level, i.e. they were undergraduate students attending an English language program and all of them had some background in English from elementary school etc. Based on their responses, the Norwegian participants showed few, if any, problems involving syntax or lexical items. Related to this, in my opinion, are the limited signs of pragmalinguistic transfer in their responses. Thus, I believe that their grammatical and linguistic competence resulted in few cases of pragmalinguistic transfer. The problem, however, seems to be related to their sociopragmatic competence, i.e. when to use what.

Some of the participants had lived and/or studied in an English-speaking country, this seemed to have a certain influence on their responses. As I pointed out in section

5.1.2, the participants who had lived and or studied abroad, chose more native-like responses in some of the situations. Although the tendency to transfer L1 sociopragmatic norms was not completely omitted, the results indicated that a stay in an L2 community may have a positive effect on the learner's sociopragmatic competence. However, the results did not indicate a one to one relationship between length of stay in the L2 community and sociopragmatic success.

The responses given by the Norwegian participants indicate that more information about cultural relativism and sociopragmatic practices in different cultures is needed. The results indicate that the participants know how to express gratitude, but that they do not know when to use the different strategies they know and that they assume universality of the rules and principles that govern sociopragmatic behaviour in Norway and thus apply these rules or principles to English. The purpose of this study, however, is not to suggest any changes in teaching material or curriculum or to determine the nature of these possible changes, to improve the pragmatic competence of students of English, but simply to indicate whether or not the participants in this study's pragmatic competence corresponds to their grammatical competence and whether they are able to express gratitude successfully in English. My opinion is that advanced learners of English as a foreign language have some difficulties with expressing gratitude in English and that their lack of knowledge within this field leads to transfer of strategies and norms from the source language into the target language.

## 6 Conclusion

In this study, I have attempted to illustrate how Norwegian advanced learners of English as a foreign language express gratitude in certain situations in Norwegian and English. My intention was to see whether the way the students expressed themselves in their mother tongue affected the way they expressed themselves in the second language and whether there were any examples of pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic transfer, especially negative transfer which may lead to misunderstandings and severe cross-cultural communicative failure. I also attempted to find out whether their performance could indicate any underlying differences in between the respective politeness systems. By investigating Norwegian students' thanking strategies, I was hoping to broaden the picture of Norwegian pragmatic practice, an area in which empirical research has been scarce, but opinions many, by comparing it to results described in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles (1986, 1993) and the practices of my own control group consisting of British students connected to the University of York. Furthermore, I intended that my results would contribute to describe the level of pragmatic knowledge among Norwegian students of English at university level.

Eisenstein and Bodman's results indicated that non-native speakers of English had considerable difficulties expressing gratitude in English. In some of the situations, the majority of responses were 'not acceptable' or 'problematical' as opposed to 'acceptable' and 'native-like' (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:173). After performing several tests of non-native speakers of English, they concluded that "... it was evident that even advanced learners of English have considerable difficulty adequately expressing gratitude. They need information on the nature of what to say, the language used to express it, and the context in which it is needed" (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993:75).

The same discourse completion test developed and used by Eisenstein and Bodman was used to elicit expressions of gratitude in my study as well. The responses were very interesting and surprising. As I indicated in the introduction, I had expected the responses of the Norwegian participants to differ from those of the British participants as well as the responses reported in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles, but the way the responses differed were rather surprising. In advertisements and newspaper articles etc,

Norwegians tend to be portrayed as cold, stiff and impolite towards other people. In the article from *Aftenposten*, Åmås argues that Norwegians slam doors in other peoples' faces, cut in line and hardly ever say *thank you* or *sorry*. One of the reasons for this, Åmås sarcastically argues, may be that our egalitarian ideals make us so suspicious, that if a stranger acts in a considerate way towards us, we automatically think he/she is trying to achieve something. Røkaas points to something similar in her study of American and Norwegian requesting behaviour. "It is not usual for Norwegians to greet, open doors or apologize for bumping into, offer assistance to, make eye contact with or smile to strangers. ... Hollos and Beeman (1974) remark that Norwegians seem to lack the linguistic devices necessary to interact with strangers" (Røkaas 2000:117, 120). However, in the data I gathered of Norwegian students and learners of English as a foreign language, there occurred both apologies and greetings and of course gratitude expressions and it did not seem like the Norwegian students lacked the linguistic devices they needed to express their thoughts and feelings.

Overall, the results indicated that the Norwegian students, when expressing gratitude, consider similar factors as the British and American participants. They consider the size of imposition, the relationship with the hearer, the social distance, the social setting of the conversation and the rights and obligations of the hearer and the speaker. However, the results also indicated that Norwegians value some of these factors differently from the British and American participants. Røkaas argues that Norwegians tend to avoid indebting themselves as much as possible (Røkaas 2000, cited in Gray 2005:55). This tendency was illustrated in my material as well. The Norwegian participants frequently expressed debt or an offer of repayment to even out the score, where native speakers of English preferred thanking strategies only. This tendency was perhaps most evident in the situation where the speaker's spouse had done some things around the house which the speaker had promised to do. It seems as if even though the spouse had done the work voluntary, the speaker considered the size of imposition to be to the degree that he/she felt the need to apologise. The responses indicated that the speaker felt that he/she had imposed on the hearer and taken up the hearer's time and thus threatened the hearer's negative face, which is considered severe in Norwegian culture. The speakers thus often chose to humiliate their own faces to restore the balance, by

using an apology or expressing debt or an offer of repayment. The British and American participants generally chose a thanking strategy or a combination of thanking strategies.

Another example of how different hierarchies of cultural values are reflected in the languages appeared in the situation involving the vice president of personnel which gave the speaker, playing the role as a relatively new employee, a raise. The responses given by the British participants as well as the responses given by the American participants, reported in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles, indicated that the preferred response was a reserved, collected thanks. Some of the British participants even chose to opt out. In her investigation of Norwegian requesting behaviour, Røkaas has found that Norwegians tend to be rather reserved when it comes to expressing emotion, however, in this situation the opposite was illustrated. While the Americans and Britons refrained from expressing emotion, the Norwegians expressed surprise, pleasure and even uncertainty in this situation. This may be related to differences in business culture. Gesteland explains that business visitors often find Norwegians "very egalitarian and less formal than people from more hierarchical cultures" (Gesteland 2002:294). The Norwegian culture in general is thought to be based on egalitarian principles and that may be one of the reasons for the participants' behaviour in this situation. It is important to note that the participants in this study were students, with most likely limited experience from a situation like this. Thus it would be interesting to compare the responses given by the students to Norwegians who have more working experience. However, the results are rather homogeneous and thus may indicate that this is how the speakers assume one is supposed to behave in this setting.

These situations may also be examples of underlying differences in the respective politeness systems. Brown and Levinson (1988:67) argue that expressing thanks offends the speaker's negative face, however, as has been discussed in my study, to refrain from expressing thanks is threatening to the hearer's positive face, i.e. his/her desire to be appreciated. Additionally, there are different ways of expressing gratitude which appeal to different aspects of the hearer's face. Generally, the strategies used by the native speakers of English tended to be strategies expressing positive politeness and appealing to the hearer's positive face, while the strategies chosen by native speakers of Norwegian generally appealed to the hearer's negative face.

Although, my results seem to indicate that there are differences in the politeness systems and that the way in which native speakers of Norwegian is different in many respects from that of native speakers of English, the differences in responses, in my opinion, were not to the extent that they would give people from Britain or America the impression that Norwegians are impolite, perhaps except from the situation involving the raise. At the same time, I do not want to undermine the differences presented in this study as well as other studies, e.g. Røkaas 2000. One point which is clearly illustrated in this study is that transfer occurs to a significant extent. The situation involving the raise is perhaps the clearest example of such transfer. In this situation, where the Norwegian responses deviate to such a great extent from those of the British and American participants, I will characterise the transfer as negative. In situations where the Norwegian responses did not deviate to such an extent, the occurrence of transfer is not necessarily negative. This may be illustrated in situation 1, which involves the speaker borrowing a small amount of money from a friend. The Norwegian participants preferred to express debt in this situation, while the expressing of debt occurred, but was less common in the British data. Thus I would argue that the transfer would not necessarily have a negative effect here.

I hypothesised that there would be cases of transfer among the learners' responses, even though they are advanced learners of English. Bou Franch argues that transfer is rather common among learners of a second language and that "research has shown that learners regularly perform speech acts such as requests, apologies, and refusals in accordance with the sociolinguistic norms of their native language ..." (Bou Franch 1998:5). It is also emphasised, as I pointed out above, that learners consider external factors as well in their production of speech acts. Bou Franch cites Kasper who states that learners

... have been shown to display sensitivity towards context-external factors such as interlocutors' familiarity and relative status ... and context-internal factors such as degree of imposition, legitimacy of the requestive goal and 'standardness' of the situation in requesting, and severity of offense, obligation to apologize, and likelihood of apology acceptance in apologizing. (Kasper 1992 cited in Bou Franch 1998:5)



Bou Franch concludes that both native speakers and non-native speakers vary their speech act strategies according to different contexts, but that “learner’s variation follows their own L1 sociolinguistic patterns” (Bou Franch 1998:5).

Generally, three factors have been used to explain why transfer occurs among learners, linguistic proficiency, cultural information and length of stay in the L2 community (Bou Franch 1998:6). In part one of the questionnaire, which was handed out to the Norwegian participants, there was a question requesting information about whether the participant had lived and/or studied in an English-speaking country. The responses given by the participants who had lived abroad indicated that a stay in the L2 community could have an influence on the speaker’s sociopragmatic competence. However, a stay in the L2 community does not automatically equal improved sociopragmatic competence, as is illustrated in Eisenstein and Bodman’s studies. Eisenstein and Bodman conclude that “although they [many of the learners they tested] have lived in the United States for some times, had not acquired the ability to express gratitude appropriately” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:176).

A certain linguistic proficiency in English is recommended to enrol in courses at university level. Thus the students participating in my study were expected to have some linguistic proficiency. This was evident in their responses as well. Although I strongly emphasised that spelling mistakes etc, were irrelevant, there were hardly any mistakes regarding spelling or grammar. In their data, Eisenstein and Bodman experienced that several of the non-native speakers had problems on the grammatical and lexical level. They report that “advanced non-native English speakers had considerable difficulty adequately expressing gratitude in the target language. Some problems were pragmalinguistic in nature, exhibiting divergence from native use on lexical and syntactic levels. Learners were often unable to approximate native idioms and routines” (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986:176). Although the Norwegian participants’ linguistic proficiency in English was high, their sociopragmatic competence could be significantly improved. Eisenstein and Bodman emphasise the importance of sociopragmatic competence as well as linguistic competence. “In our judgement, socio-pragmatic limitations were more severe, because the socio-cultural incongruities they [the non-native participants] revealed created the potential for more serious misunderstandings” (Eisenstein &

Bodman 1986:176). The conclusive remarks by Eisenstein and Bodman can be related to Bou Franch's second constraint, i.e. cultural information. The non-native participants in Eisenstein and Bodman's studies showed a lack of cultural knowledge and thus performed poorly from a sociopragmatic perspective. The same may be said for the Norwegian participants in my study. However, due to similarities in culture, their sociopragmatic performance were similar to the appropriate sociopragmatic way of expressing oneself in English.

In the data I analysed, there were few examples of pragmalinguistic transfer. I had expected, based on e.g. Røkaas' and Fretheim's arguments that Norwegians commonly use *takk for* (thanks for) expressions, that the Norwegian participants would have chosen to use such expressions in English whenever possible. Fretheim states that Norwegians thank profusely and that e.g. "A thousand thanks for the food' is the right thing to say to the host(ess) after a meal. The most curious one, however, is probably 'Thanks for me', said to your host(ess) when the party is over" (Fretheim 2005:146). Similarly, Røkaas argues that Norwegians rely on set routinised phrases in social leave-taking situations, e.g. "Takk for i kveld. (Thanks for this evening)" (Røkaas 2000:122). However, my suspicions were not confirmed. In situation 14, where the speaker has been invited to a new friend's house and is walked to the door at the end of the party, one might have expected that the speaker would transfer these routinised *takk for* expressions into English. The results indicated that even though a *takk for* expression, i.e. where the speaker specifies what he/she is thanking for, was common in the Norwegian material. Few of the participants chose this option in English. I indicated that this may be due to one of two reasons. Firstly, these *takk for* expressions are often made fun of due to their non-correspondence in several other languages and thus the participants may be aware of the danger of using an expression like this when expressing themselves in English. This may also be related to the participants' linguistic proficiency. Secondly, as Røkaas points out, being invited to dinner at another person's house is perhaps considered more 'important' in Norwegian culture than in American culture (Røkaas 2000:118). Thus the Norwegian participants may have felt that the imposition was great and that they needed to emphasise their gratitude and consequently used longer expressions of gratitude than the standardised *takk for i kveld*.

All in all, the results indicated that the Norwegian students frequently relied on their L1 competence when expressing gratitude and that transfer occurred. The transfer was not always of a negative sort, due to similar practices in the expressing of gratitude in Norwegian and English. When comparing Norwegian practices with those illustrated in the material provided by the British participants and the results presented in Eisenstein and Bodman's articles, there are some general tendencies which can be summed up. First of all, the learners tended to express indebtedness and were occupied with evening out the score. Secondly, the Norwegian learners tended to value certain factors more heavily than the native speakers, e.g. their responses indicated that to threaten another person's negative face is considered severe and requires face work to repair any potential damage to the interpersonal relationship. Thirdly, Røkaas' argument that Norwegians are reserved when it comes to expressing emotions needs to be further investigated. Norwegians are generally assumed to be rather reserved and aloof, but in several of the situations many of the Norwegian participants expressed emotions, most surprisingly, in the situation involving the raise, where both Britons and Americans showed a more reserved communication style. A fourth point to consider is the implications these tendencies may have for language teaching. My results gave a clear indication of the distinction between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence. However, there were some indications that the Norwegian participants who had lived abroad adjusted their responses somewhat according to the target language norm. It would be interesting to investigate these tendencies further in a larger scale study to test their validity, but this is beyond the scope of the present study. However, I hope that I have been able to convey my interest in and fascination for this topic in this paper and that the results might serve as a source of inspiration for further study.

### ***6.1 Limitations and suggestions for further research***

There is a variety of angles from which speech acts can be studied and this paper attempts to assess merely a few aspects of the speech act of thanking. In the process of writing this paper, several interesting points occurred which would be exciting to study in more detail, but which unfortunately are beyond the scope of this study. Thus I have summarised some points here to arouse the interest and encourage further research.

To extract data to form the basis of this study, I have used a method frequently used in sociolinguistics, e.g. to elicit speech acts. This method, however, has been hotly debated and critics have argued that this method may not elicit data which apply to real language use in such situations. Resulting in their 2000 article, Billmyer and Varghese compared two types of DCTs eliciting requests, one with rather short descriptions of the situations and one with more detailed descriptions and more prompts. They illustrated that the factors included in the description of the situations may influence the way the participants express themselves. It would have been interesting to see whether similar results would be found when comparing different types of DCTs eliciting gratitude expressions.

My study illustrated tendencies that question 'common assumptions' about Norwegian politeness (or rather impoliteness) and the results indicate that speakers use different strategies and apply to different aspects of the hearer's face when expressing gratitude. It would have been interesting to compare the production of the speech act of thanking with other speech acts, e.g. requests. Thanking differ from requests in that it is always connected to a prior, or sometimes a subsequent, act, either verbal or non-verbal. Brown and Levinson (1988:66-67) argue that requests threaten the hearer's negative face, while expressing thanks threatens speaker's negative face and thus the speaker may use different strategies to reduce or avoid damaging the relationship with his/her interlocutor.

A third point which may be the subject for further study is that of personal factors in relation to politeness. Mills (2003) points out that gender may play a significant role in determining which strategies that are appropriate in different situations and that the relationship between gender and politeness is even more complex when comparing different cultures. Perhaps there are differences in the choice of gratitude strategies between men and women or in the combination of strategies, which could be looked into.

Furthermore, it would also have been interesting to compare the performance of learners of English as a foreign language, EFL, to the performance to that of learners of English as a second language, ESL. My results indicate to some extent that a stay in the L2 community may influence the pragmatic competence of the speaker. However, the results are noe explicit in this sense. Thus it would be interesting to see whether living abroad would enhance the pragmatic competence of Norwegian learners of English.

## Appendix 1

The original DCT introduced in Eisenstein and Bodman's 1986 article.

### The questionnaire part 2

**Please read the following short descriptions of situations in which you might find yourself. Think of what you might say in response to this situation. Write your response (if any) in the space provided. Say as much or as little as you wish – you may choose to say nothing in several circumstances.**

1. It's Friday night and you and some of your friends are going out. As you are about to enter the pub, you realise that you've forgotten your credit card and that you only have £2.00 in your wallet. You say 'Darn, I seem to have forgotten my credit card.' Your friend asks if you need money and offers to lend you some. He/she asks you how much you need. You say, 'Could you lend me £5.00? I'll pay you back on Monday. Your friend says, 'Sure. Are you sure you don't need more than that?' You say you don't. Your friend gives you the £5.00.
2. You board the bus, pay your money and take a seat near the front of the bus. Just before you stop, you signal the driver to stop. You move to the front, the bus comes to a stop, and the doors open.
3. It's your birthday, and you are having a few people over for dinner. A friend brings you a present. You unwrap it and find a blue sweater.
4. You work for a large company. The Vice-President of Personnel calls you into his office. He tells you to sit down. You feel a bit nervous, because you have only been working there for six months. The Vice-President says 'You're doing a good job. In fact we are so pleased with you that I'm going to give you a £10.00 a week raise.'
5. In the supermarket, the cashier puts your groceries in bags and turns to begin checking out the next customer. You pick up your bags and leave.
6. At a table in a restaurant a friend says, 'You have something on your face.' You ask where. Your friend tells you. You rub your face and ask, 'is it off?' Your friend says that it is.
7. You find yourself in a sudden need of money - £250.00. You mention this to a friend. Your friend immediately offers to lend it to you. You are surprised and very grateful. Your friend gives you £250.00. At first you say, 'Oh no, I didn't mean for you to lend it to me. I couldn't take it. Your friend says, 'Really it's

alright. What are friends for?’ After your friend insists again, you take the money.

8. You are married. Both you and your spouse work. You come home late from work and find that your spouse has done some work around the house that you had promised to do, but had not had a chance to do.
9. Your friend suggests going out to lunch. You say that you’d like to go, but you only have £2.00. Your friend says, ‘Ah, don’t worry. I’ll take you today.’ Your friend takes you to a very nice restaurant – a much more expensive than the ones you usually go to. You have a wonderful meal. Your friend pays, and you get up to leave.
10. You have just gotten a new and better job. A friend at the office tells you she has organized a farewell party for you.
11. You have just gotten your hair cut in a new style, and you like it better than the old way. Your friend sees you and says, ‘Hey, you’ve got a new haircut. It looks nice.’
12. You are sharing an apartment with a friend. You’re both sitting and relaxing in the living room. You ask your friend to hand you the newspaper which is nearby. Your friend gives you the newspaper.
13. You pick up your car in a parking garage. As the attendant who drove up your car walks past you to get the next person’s car, you hand him a tip.
14. You have been invited to a home of a rather new friend. You have dinner with him and his wife and a few other friends of theirs. The food was great, and you really enjoyed the evening. As you leave, your hosts accompany you to the door.

## Appendix 2

The Norwegian translation of the DCT  
Spørreskjema – del 2

**Les situasjonsbeskrivelsene nedenfor og tenk på hva du ville sagt i hver av situasjonene. Skriv ned nøyaktig hva du ville sagt i den ledige plassen under hver situasjonsbeskrivelse. Svar på norsk. Dersom du ikke ville sagt noe som helst, lar du plassen stå åpen.**

1. Det er fredagskveld og du og noen venner skal ut på byen. I det du er på vei inn på puben oppdager du at du har glemt bankkortet ditt hjemme og at du bare har 10 kr i lommeboka. Du mumler 'Søren, jeg har visst glemt bankkortet mitt hjemme.'. En av vennene dine spør om du trenger penger og sier at du godt kan låne av han/henne. Du spør om du kan låne 50 kr og sier at du vil betale de tilbake på mandag. Vennen/venninnen din sier 'Helt i orden, er du sikker på at du ikke trenger mer?' Du sier at det holder og vennen/venninnen din gir deg pengene.
2. Du går på bussen, kjøper billett og tar plass i fremre del av bussen. Like før du skal av, trykker du på stopp-knappen. Du går framover i bussen, og når bussen stopper, åpner bussjåføren døren.
3. Du har bursdag og har invitert noen få venner over på middag. En av vennene gir deg en gave. Du pakker den opp og ser at det er en blå genser.
4. Du jobber for et stort firma. Personalsjefen ber deg om å komme inn på kontoret hans og sette deg ned. Du er litt nervøs, for du har bare jobbet der i et halvt år. Personalsjefen sier: 'Du gjør en god jobb. Vi er faktisk så fornøyd med deg at vi ønsker å gi deg en lønnsforhøyelse på 1000 kr i måneden.'
5. Dere sitter ved et bord på en restaurant og vennen/venninnen din sier 'Du har noe i ansiktet.' Du spør hvor og vennen/venninnen din forklarer hvor det er. Du gnir deg i ansiktet og spør om det er borte. Vennen/venninnen din sier at det er borte.
6. Du er kommet i en pengeknipe og trenger 5000 kr veldig raskt. Du nevner dette for en venn/venninne. Vennen/venninnen din tilbyr seg å låne deg pengene. Du blir overasket og veldig takknemlig. Vennen/venninnen din gir deg 5000 kr. Først sier du 'Å nei, jeg mente ikke at du skulle låne meg pengene. Det er alt for mye.' Vennen/venninnen din sier 'Det går bra. Hva skal man ellers med venner?' Etter at vennen/venninnen din har insistert nok en gang, tar du imot pengene.
7. Du er gift. Både du og mannen/kona di jobber. Du kommer hjem fra jobb sent og ser at mannen/kona di har gjort noe husarbeid som du hadde lovet å gjøre, men som du ikke hadde fått gjort.
8. Vennen/ venninnen din foreslår at dere går ut og spiser lunsj. Du sier at du gjerne skulle gjort det, men at du ikke har så mye penger. Vennen/venninnen din sier 'Ikke tenk på det, jeg spanderer i dag.' Han/hun din tar deg med til en fin restaurant – en mye mer eksklusiv restaurant enn dere pleier å gå på. Dere har et fantastisk måltid. Vennen/venninnen din betaler, og du reiser deg for å gå.
9. Du har akkurat fått en ny og bedre jobb. En venn/venninne på den gamle jobben din forteller deg at han/hun har organisert en avskjedsfest for deg.

10. Du har akkurat vært hos frisøren og fått en ny frisyre. Du er godt fornøyd og liker den nye sveisen bedre enn den gamle. En venn/venninne ser deg og sier, 'Hei, har du klippet deg? Så fin du er blitt.'

11. Du deler leilighet med en venn/venninne. Dere sitter og slapper av i stua og du spør vennen/venninnen om han/hun kan sende deg avisen som ligger like ved. Vennen/venninnen din gir deg avisen.

12. Du er invitert hjem på middag til en relativt ny venn. Du spiser middag med ham, kona og noen venner av dem. Maten smaker kjempegodt og du har en veldig hyggelig kveld. Når du skal gå, følger vertskapet deg til døren.



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